

FIRST JOLTING ISSUE!



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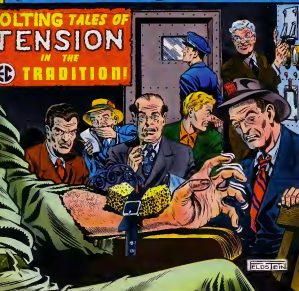


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CANADA

SHOCK

SUSPENSTORIES

**JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION**
IN THE
TRADITION!



BRACE YOURSELVES FOR THE IMPACT OF THE
SHOCKING WIND-UP TO THIS YARN!

THE NEAT JOB!

"GOOD LORD, LADY!
WHAT HAVE YOU DO
IT?"

"YOU'D BETTER TELL US
ABOUT IT, MRS. BERGEM!
START FROM THE
BEGINNING!"



**A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY**

Book 2
KIDNEY

ELEANOR BERENSON'S FACE WAS A RIGID WHITE MASK WITH WIDE STARING EYES! SHE GAZED BLANKLY INTO THE SHADOWS OF THE CELLARWORM SHOP! THE TWO DETECTIVES FROM HOMESIDE WAITED IN SILENCE FOR HER TO START HER STORY! WHEN SHE BEGAN TO TALK, HER VOICE WAS UNEXPRESSIVE... A LOW DREARY MONOTONE...

I... I MARRIED ARTHUR THREE YEARS AGO! I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT. PERHAPS I WAS AFRAID OF THE PROSPECT OF BECOMING AN OLD MAID...



I'D EXPECTED SOMETHING SMALL AND INEXPENSIVE, SINCE ARTHUR HAD NOT BEEN WEALTHY... BUT I'D NEVER PICTURED ANYTHING LIKE THE HOUSE THAT LOOKED UP BEFORE ME! IT WAS ONE OF THOSE TREMENDOUS CENTURY-OLD MONSTROSITIES THAT THE VERY RICH OF THAT PERIOD HAD CONSIDERED QUITE ELEGANT! IT LOOKED MADDOG...



COME! LET'S GO INSIDE! IT'S COMPLETELY FURNISHED! YOU'LL ADORE IT!

PERHAPS I'LL TRY!

...IN ANY CASE, I DID IT! I HAD NEVER LOVED HIM! I JUST NEEDED A HUSBAND... BADLY...

HAUFF, ELEANOR?

YES, ARTHUR! VERY! BUT... WHERE WILL WE LIVE AFTER THE HONEYMOON IS OVER?



YOU'LL SEE IT, ELEANOR! I'M SURE YOU'LL LIKE IT!

OF COURSE I'LL LIKE IT ARTHUR... IF YOU BOUGHT IT FOR ME! BECAUSE I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT!



I WAS GOING TO SURPRISE YOU... BUT I MIGHT AS WELL TELL YOU NOW! I'VE PUT A DEPOSIT ON A HOUSE IN BUCKLEY!

OH, ARTHUR! REALLY? HOW WONDERFUL! WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? IS IT FURNISHED?



I COULDN'T WAIT FOR THE HONEYMOON TO BE OVER! FRANKLY, I WAS BORED STIFF! NEVER HAVING LOVED ARTHUR, I FOUND THE WHOLE THING QUITE DULL! I LOOKED FORWARD TO THE PLEASURE OF LIVING IN MY OWN HOUSE WITH DELIGHTFUL ANTICIPATION! FINALLY WE ARRIVED!

THERE IT IS! ISN'T IT ATTRACTIVE?

Y... YES! VERY... NICE!



ARTHUR MADE A FEIBLE ATTEMPT TO GARRY ME ACROSS THE THRESHOLD BUT DIDN'T EXACTLY SUCCEED! AS HE STOOD BESIDE ME... BREATHING HARD... I SURVEYED THE HORROR HE'D DRAGGED ME INTO! THE PLACE WAS FURNISHED, ALL RIGHT... IN FACT IT WAS OVER-FURNISHED! EVERY AVAILABLE INCH OF SPACE WAS OCCUPIED BY SOME NOISEATING GUST-EXPLODER...



I LOVE ANTIQUES... DON'T YOU, ELEANOR?

OH... YES, ARTHUR! THEY'RE SO... SO INTERESTING!

THE MARE! I SAW THE PLACE... I FELL IN LOVE WITH IT, ELEANOR! I WANT IT NOT JUST EXACTLY AS IT IS... EXACTLY!

OH... I WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING, ARTHUR! EVERYTHING IS PERFECT!



I HATED THE PLACE! WHEN WE SETTLED DOWN TO A DAILY ROUTINE AND ARTHUR RETURNED TO WORK, I TRIED REARRANGING THE FURNITURE TO MAKE IT LOOK A LITTLE BETTER! BUT, THE NIGHT AFTER I DID IT...

HAVE A HARD DAY AT THE OFFICE, DEAR?

NOT NEARLY! WHAT IN BLAZES!



THE BOY HED AN A MISTY BLEW UP! WHAT DID YOU DO? I THOUGHT IT MIGHT LOOK NICER...



YOU THOUGHT I NEVER MIND WHAT YOU THOUGHT? I TOLD YOU I WANTED THIS HOUSE LEFT EXACTLY AS IT WAS! I MEANT IT! NOW CHANGE IT ALL BACK AGAIN!

YES... ARTHUR!



IT'S FUNNY HOW YOU GET TO KNOW A MAN AFTER YOU'VE MARRIED TO HIM! SO I GOT TO KNOW ARTHUR! OH, LORD, YES! AND THE MORE I LEARNED, THE MORE I BEGAN TO DESPISE HIM!

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING... AND EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE, ELEANOR!

YES... ARTHUR!



HE WAS RIDICULOUS... A FORD FOR REPRESENTATIVE RIGHT HE'D COME HOME FROM WORK AND GO THROUGH HIS DRAWERS TO SEE THAT I HADN'T DISTURBED THEIR PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS!

ELEANOR! THE LADYBOTT CAME BACK TODAY, DIDN'T IT?

YES... ARTHUR!



HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU MY SHORTS GO ON THE LEFT... FOLDED IN HALF... BUTTOMS UP?

YES... ARTHUR!



IT WAS HADENING! HE'D GO THROUGH THE HOUSE ON A WHITE-GLOVE INSPECTION...

TCH...TCH! THE TOP OF THIS DOOR JAMB IS *DUSTY*. ELEANOR! YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO BE *LESS SLOPPY* WHEN YOU CLEAN!



HE'D EVEN CRITICIZE THE WAY I'D SET THE TABLE...

THIS IS *NOT* THE WAY WE *FOLD* *HANKIES*, DEAR! YOU MUST LEARN TO DO IT *RIGHT*!

YES... ARTHUR!



IT GOT WORSE AND WORSE...

LOOK AT THIS TABLE, ELEANOR! THERE'S *DUST* ON IT! YOU'LL HAVE TO BE *NEATER* THAN THAT!

YES... ARTHUR!



BY OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY, HE'D MADE A NERVOUS WRECK OUT OF ME! IT WAS ABOUT THAT TIME THAT HE'D BEGUN BUILDING HIS WORKSHOP HERE IN THE CELLAR!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE, ARTHUR?

YOU'LL SEE, DEAR!



YES! AND IT'S GOING TO *SPAY* THAT WAY, TOO! TAKE *LESSONS* FROM THE WAY I KEEP *THIS* PLACE, DEAR! YOU'LL SEE WHAT *NEATNESS* AND *ORDERLINESS* MEAN!

YES, ARTHUR!



HE'D SPENT A SMALL FORTUNE ON THE MACHINE TOOLS HE'D INSTALLED IN THE WORKSHOP! HE'D BOUGHT EVERY GADGET AVAILABLE! NOW SO YOU LIKE IT, DEAR?

IT LOOKS VERY NICE, DEAR!



OH, LORD, HE KEPT THAT WORKSHOP *NEAT*! EVERYTHING HAD A SPECIFIC PLACE WHERE IT WAS KEPT, STORED, OR HUNG! HE HAD *SHelves* OF *JARS*, EACH LABELED CAREFULLY, WHERE NUTS, SCREWS, AND OTHER ITEMS WERE SORTED AND FILED...

I KNOW WHERE *EVERYTHING* IS! *EVERY THING!* THAT'S *NEATNESS*, ELEANOR!

YES, ARTHUR!



"BY THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR I WAS READY TO WALK OUT... DRUCK EVERYTHING AND LEAVE! HE'D MOVED INTO THE KITCHEN WITH HIS PERVERTED MAMA FOR DISHELLED..."



ELEANOR! YOU USED A CAN OF TOMATO SOUP AND DIDN'T CHECK IT OFF THE LIST! AND YOU DIDN'T FILL IN THE EMPTY PLACE WITH ONE FROM THE BACK!

I... I FORGOT, ARTHUR!

HIS IDIOTIC CHECK-LISTS BLAMED ME! HE HAD ONE FOR THE FOOD WHICH HE KEPT IN THE PANTRY! IT WAS AN INVENTORY OF THE CANNED GOODS! WHEN I USED A CAN, I WAS SUPPOSED TO CHECK IT OFF THE LIST SO IT COULD BE REPLACED...



MMMM! RUNNING LOW ON RHUBARB, I REALIZED...

HE KEPT ANOTHER ONE IN THE BATHROOM ON THE INSIDE OF THE MEDICINE CABINET DOOR! IT LISTED ALL THE DRUGS AND THEIR QUANTITIES! REGULARLY HE'D COUNT THE PILLS IN THE BOTTLES!

ELEANOR! YOU USED TWO ASPIRIN TABLETS AND DIDN'T CHECK THEM OFF!



YOU FORGOT! THAT'S SO EXCUSE! YOU MUSTN'T FORGET! DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!

YES, ARTHUR!

HE EVEN STARTED ORGANIZING THE WAY I KEPT THE KITCHEN UTENSILS...

FROM NOW ON, FOTS AND PANS WILL BE KEPT IN THEIR PROPER PLACES IN THE DISPOARDS! NO MORE THROWING THEM HAP- HAZARDLY INTO THE STOVE!



THEN HE'D MOVED INTO MY BEDROOM, CRITICIZING THE WAY I KEPT MY CLOSET...

HARBERS SHOULD ALL HOOK OVER THE HOS FROM THE FRONT! AND YOUR CLOTHES SHOULD ALL HANG THE SAME WAY... BUTTON SIDE FACING LEFT! THAT'S NEATNESS!



YES, ARTHUR!

"HE ASSEMBLED MY DRAWERS..."

KEEP YOUR UNDIES TO THE SHIRT... STOCKINGS IN SMALL DORES... SWEATERS TO THE LEFT... FLOURED IN THE MIDDLE...



YES, ARTHUR!

"THEN HE'D CHECK TO SEE IF HIS ORDERS HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT."

YOU CALLED ME, ARTHUR?

ELEANOR! YOU'VE GOT A PAIR OF BLACK PUMPS IN AMONG THE BROWN SHOES IN THE SHOE RACK! LORD, WILL YOU EVER LEARN TO BE NEAT? BROWN SHOES ON ONE SHELF, BLACK BELOW!



"SOMETIMES...SOMETIMES I FELT LIKE..."

ELEANOR! THIS MAGAZINE IS UPSIDE DOWN IN THE STAND! TITLES UP... COVERS OUT... PLEASE!

YES... ARTHUR!



"ONE DAY, I NEEDED A THUMB TACK AND HAD SEARCHED ARTHUR'S WORKSHOP FOR ONE! THAT NIGHT..."

ELEANOR! WERE YOU DOWN HERE IN MY WORKSHOP?

Y. YES, ARTHUR! I NEEDED A...



KEEP OUT OF HERE, UNDERSTAND?

THIS IS THE ONE PLACE I CAN KEEP NEAT! DON'T YOU COME AROUND SLOPPING IT UP WITH YOUR MESSY WAYS... DO YOU HEAR? I FORBID YOU TO COME DOWN HERE AGAIN!

YES, ARTHUR!



"THEN, YESTERDAY, A PICTURE'D COME LOOSE FROM THE WALL! THE NAIL THAT HELD IT WAS SO OLD, IT JUST BENT AND..."

WHAT WAS THAT?



"I'D RUSHED DOWN TO THE GLAZIER TO HAVE THE BROKEN PICTURE GLASS REPLACED AND RETURNED BEFORE ARTHUR'D GOTTEN HOME..."

I'VE GOT TO HAND IT BACK UP AGAIN OR HELL HAVE A FIT!



"I WENT DOWN TO THE CELLAR AND TOOK A HAMMER! I NOTED CAREFULLY WHERE I'D TAKEN IT FROM, SO I COULD REPLACE IT EXACTLY RIGHT..."

HE'LL BE STEAMING IF HE FINDS OUT!



THEN IT TAKEN DOWN ONE OF THE HUNDREDS OF LABELED JARS THAT LINED THE SHELVES... ONE WITH NAILS THAT LOOKED LIKE THE RIGHT SIZE...



'I TOOK A NAIL OUT OF THE JAR AND STARTED TO PUT IT BACK IN ITS PROPER PLACE ON THE SHELF, WHEN...



'THE JAR SHATTERED INTO A THOUSAND PIECES ON THE CEMENT CELLAR FLOOR AND THE NAILS LAY SCATTERED CRAZILY ABOUT! FOR A MOMENT I STARED AT THE MESS... GUMFONDED...



'THEN I BEGAN TO CRY! THE TENSION...THE NERVOUSNESS OF VIOLATING ARTHUR'S WORK SHOP-SANCTUARY WAS TOO MUCH FOR ME! SUDDENLY UPSTAIRS...A DOOR CLANNED...



'I LISTENED TO HIM MOVING THROUGH THE HOUSE! I HEARD HIM STOP FOR A MOMENT! THEN I HEARD HIM SHOUT...



'I COULD HEAR HIM STAMPING TOWARD THE CELLAR SOON! HE WAS ANGRY! I COULD TELL! I WAS FRIGHTENED! WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN HE FOUND ME...AND THE BROKEN JAR...



'HE GLARED AT THE BROKEN JAR AND THE NAILS SCATTERED OVER THE WORKSHOP FLOOR! HIS FACE GREW RED... HIS EYES GLAZED...



"HIS FACE WAS GRIMACE HE HANDED
WILDLY... YOU WANTED TO HANG
THE PICTURE UP... SO YOU CAME
DOWN HERE FOR A MAIL, EN? ONLY
YOU **BROKE THE JAR, EN?**
**BLOFFT... BLOFFT ELEANOR...
BROKE THE JAR!**



"I FELT EVERYTHING SPINNING...
MY FACE GREW HOT... MY CHEEKS
BLURRED..."

**CAN'T YOU DO ANYTHING
NEAT? CAN'T YOU?
CAN'T YOU?**



**CAN'T YOU DO
ANYTHING NEAT?**



"I BACKED AWAY AND MY HAND CLOSED ON SOME-
THING... A HANDLE OF ONE OF ARTHUR'S TOOLS! I
PULLED IT FROM ITS PLACE AS EVERYTHING WENT
BLACK..."

ELEANOR!



"ELEANOR NODDED TO THE LITTLE FILE OF MAIL, SORTED
AND ODD ITEMS THAT HAD EMPIRED OUT OF THE PORE
OF JARS..."

"I REMEMBER DOING **THAT!** I REMEMBER
WANTING TO **SHOW HIM** I COULD BE
NEAT! I REMEMBER I WANTED IT TO BE
A **NEAT JOB!** I CLEANED UP
EVERYTHING WHEN I WAS
FINISHED!"



"THE DETECTIVES FROM HOMICIDE TURNED TOWARD THE ROWS OF JARS THAT LINED THE SHELVES! EACH ONE WAS
IN ITS PLACE, BUT ARTHUR'S PRECISE CAREFULLY LETTERED LABELS HAD BEEN REPLACED BY NEW ONES IN ELEANOR'S
NERVOUS SCRAWL! THEY EACH BRIEFLY DESCRIBED THE CONTENTS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE JARS..."

LOOK FOR YOURSELVES!
I **CLEANED UP** THE
BLOOD... **EVERY DROP!**

YEAH, LADY! YOU
CERTAINLY DID A
NEAT JOB!

CHINE
VERY
NEAT!



HERE IS A TALE OF TENSION WITH AN ELECTRIFYING FINISH!

YELLOW!



**A WAR
SUSPENSE STORY**

COLONEL CLARK HENDERSON STUDIED THE MULTI-COLORED TERRAIN MAP THAT HUNG ON THE BATTERED WALL OF THE LOW BOMB-SCARRED BUILDING HE'D CHOSEN AS HIS TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS! IN THE DISTANCE, MUFFLED EXPLOSIONS DENOTED THE CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE ENEMY ARTILLERY.

GET ME HEADQUARTERS ON THE PHONE, SERGEANT...
RIGHT AWAY!

SORRY, SIR! CAN'T SEEM TO GET THROUGH! OUR LINES MUST BE CUT!

THE COLONEL CLUTCHED ANGERLY AND STRODE TO THE OPEN DOORWAY WHERE A SENTRY STOOD AT ATTENTION.

GET CAPTAIN WILLIAMS OF "B" COMPANY OVER HERE, IMMEDIATELY! TELL HIM IT'S URGENT!

YES, SIR!



THE COLONEL STRODE BACK TO HIS DESK, LIT A CIGARETTE, AND PUFFED IT ANXIOUSLY. FINALLY, CAPTAIN MILLERIN STEPPED THROUGH THE DOORWAY AND SALUTED SHARPLY. COLONEL HENDERSON RETURNED THE SALUTE.

YOU SENT FOR ME, COLONEL?

AT EASE, CAPTAIN. YOU CAN SMOKE IF YOU LIKE!



COLONEL HENDERSON POINTED TO THE MAP... HIS FACE GRIM.

THE SITUATION IS SERIOUS, CAPTAIN! THE GERMANS HAVE BROKEN THROUGH HERE... HERE... AND HERE! THEY'VE COMPLETELY BY-PASSED OUR LEFT FLANK AND HAVE BEGUN MOVING THROUGH THE HEDGE-ROWS AT OUR REAR!



SERGEANT MAURER, HERE, REPORTS THAT COMMUNICATION WITH HEADQUARTERS IS IMPOSSIBLE, WHICH PROBABLY MEANS THEY'VE LOCATED OUR PHONE LINES AND CUT THEM!



LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE TRYING TO SURROUND US, SIR!

EXACTLY! I WANT THOSE PHONE LINES REPAIRED, CAPTAIN... AT ANY COST! WE'VE GOT TO GET THROUGH TO HEADQUARTERS FOR HELP BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

YES, SIR! I'LL ORDER A SQUAD OUT AT ONCE!



EGG! OH, BY THE WAY, CAPTAIN! HOW'S MARTIN... ER... MY SON, LIEUTENANT HENDERSON, COMING? THIS IS HIS FIRST TIME IN COMBAT!

MAY I BE FRANK, SIR?



WHY, YES! SO AHEAD? WHAT IS IT?

WELL, SIR! I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PUT THIS... WELL, SOME OF THE MEN IN HIS PLATOON ARE GERMANS! HIS SERGEANT, WHO'S AN OLD TIMER, TOLD ME... WELL... HE CALLED YOUR SON... THAT IS...



WELL, MAH! SPEAK UP! WHAT DID HE CALL HIM?

HE CALLED HIM 'YELLOW' SIR! HE ASKED TO BE TRANSFERRED TO A DIFFERENT PLATOON! HE SAID LIEUTENANT HENDERSON IS A GOWD... SIR!



COLONEL HENDERSON STUDIED CAPTAIN MILLER... SHOOKED AT WHAT HE'D JUST HEARD! THEN HE BEGAN TO SPEAK... HIS VOICE WAS LOW AND RASPY, WITH A GRIM DETERMINED TONE...



THAT MISSION, CAPTAIN? THE ONE I JUST ASSIGNED TO YOU? I WANT LIEUTENANT HENDERSON TO LEAD THAT SQUAD OR IF... IF THAT CLEAR?

Y-YES, SIR!

COLONEL HENDERSON GAZED SHARPLY, DISMISSING THE CAPTAIN! AS MILLER DISAPPEARED OUT OF THE OPEN DOORWAY, THE COLONEL SANK INTO HIS CHAIR SLOWLY... STARING BLANKLY AFTER HIM! HIS EYES CLOSED... REFLECTING THE LIGHT OF THE REDDISH LAMP OVERHEAD...



I DON'T BELIEVE IT! MARTIN? MY OWN SON? A COMMAND? THEY... THEY MUST BE MISTAKEN!

COLONEL HENDERSON SAT, HEAD IN HANDS, FOR SOME TIME... LISTENING TO THE DISTANT DULL REPORTS OF THE ENEMY BARRAGE! SUDDENLY THE CRUNCHING FOOTSTEPS OF MARCHING MEN OUTSIDE MADE HIM LEAP TO HIS FEET! A SQUAD ON A MISSION WAS PASSING BY...



LIEUTENANT HENDERSON!

THE COLONEL WATCHED THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT BREAK FROM THE HEAD OF THE SQUAD AND MOVE TOWARD HIM! MARTIN HENDERSON, LIEUTENANT... INFANTRY... U.S. ARMY! HIS SON!

YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS, LIEUTENANT?

YES, SIR!



SEE THAT YOU **GARY** THEM OUT, LIEUTENANT!

YES, SIR!



THE COLONEL WATCHED THE SQUAD MOVE OFF IN THE DARKNESS! HE WHISPERED UNDER HIS BREATH AFTER THEM...



MAKE ME PROUD OF YOU, MY SON! SHOW THEM THEY'RE WRONG ABOUT YOU! SHOW THEM YOU'RE NO COMMAND!

OVERHEAD, A SHELL WHINED INTO THE NIGHT, EXPLODING OFF TO THE WEST! THE COLONEL TURNED AND REENTERED THE SHELL-WARRED BUILDING AND SAT DOWN TO WAIT...



IF I DON'T GET THROWN TO HEADQUARTERS SOON, WE'LL BE **SITTING-DUCKS** OUT HERE!

IT WAS TOWARD MORNING WHEN
LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON
STUMBLED INTO THE COLONEL'S
HEADQUARTERS, GASPING FOR
BREATH...

MARTY? MY
BOY? WHAT
HAPPENED?

AMMO! I WAS
WIPED OUT THE
WHOLE SQUAD...
SAS? WANTED TO
GET AWAY!



THE LINES?
DID YOU
REPAIR THE
LINES?

COULDN'T!
SAS? THEY
WERE WAITING
FOR US... SAS?
IT WAS A TRAP!
SOS... SOS...



THE COLONEL MADE A MOVE TO
COMFORT HIS TREMBLING SON!
SUDDENLY, A SOUND IN THE DOOR-
WAY MADE HIM LOOK UP! CAPTAIN
MILLIKEN STOOD THERE, SUPPORTING
A WOUNDED DROVEVELED BLEEDING
SERGEANT...

CAPTAIN? L.I.
WHAT'S HAP-
PENED TO THE
SERGEANT
THERE?

TELL HIM,
REPRESENT GO
AHEAD? TELL
HIM!



THE SERGEANT LIFTED HIS EYES... STARING AT THE
COLONEL'S TREMBLING SON? HE GRIMACED IN PAIN...
COUGHING UP BLOOD...

HE... HE RAN OUT ON US!
HE LEFT US... TO FIGHT
THEM OFF... COUGH... WHILE
HE HIGH-TAILED IT OUT
OF THERE!

WHAT? IS THAT
TRUE, LIEUTENANT?

NO? NO?



IT IS TRUE? IT... COUGH...
COUGH... IT IS? HIS
FELLOW? FELLOW?
FELLOW? FELLOW?

IS LIEUTENANT HENDERSON
COMMANDING OFFICER...
SIR, I UNDERSTAND HE BE
PLACED UNDER ARREST
TO FACE COURT-MARTIAL...
FOR VIOLATION OF DUTY
AND DEFECTION OF HIS
MEN WHILE UNDER FIRE?



THE COLONEL'S FACE SHOWED NO EMOTION AS HE
REPLIED...

IF THAT IS YOUR CHARGE, CAPTAIN
MILLIKEN, LIEUTENANT HENDERSON
WILL STAND TRIAL...
IMMEDIATELY!

ON YOUR FEET,
LIEUTENANT!



LIEUTENANT HENDERSON LOOKED AT HIS FATHER...
HIS EYES FLASHING! THE COLONEL TURNED AWAY...

COURT-MARTIAL WILL
CONVENE IN TWENTY-
MINUTES, CAPTAIN!
NOTIFY THE OTHER
OFFICERS THAT ARE
AVAILABLE?

YES, SIR!
LET'S GO,
LIEUTENANT!

SOS...
SOS...



TWENTY MINUTES LATER, A COURT-MARTIAL HEARD THE CHARGES AGAINST LIEUTENANT HENDERSON.

LIEUTENANT HENDERSON! HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY IN YOUR DEFENSE BEFORE THIS COURT PASSES JUDGEMENT UPON YOU?

N...NO, SIR!



THE COLONEL CONTINUED! HE LOWERED HIS GAZE SO HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO SEE THE LOOK IN HIS SON'S EYES...

THE PENALTY FOR THIS OFFENSE, LIEUTENANT, IS DEATH BY A FIRING SQUAD!

NO!



I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE THAN TO ORDER THE PENALTY TO BE CARRIED OUT!

DAD! HOW COULD YOU? HOW COULD YOU? SOB...



COLONEL HENDERSON STUDIED EACH OF THE SLIPS HANDED HIM? THE COLONEL WAS *ARMED THROUGH AND THROUGH!* NO SIGN OF EMOTION OR FEELING EITHER CROSSED HIS FACE OR COLORED HIS VOICE AS HE ANNOUNCED...

LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON! IT IS THE FINDING OF THIS COURT-MARTIAL, THAT, IN VIEW OF THE TESTIMONY GIVEN HERE, YOU ARE *GUilty* AS CHARGED!

NO! NO!



THE COLONEL LIFTED HIS EYES AND WATCHED HIS SON BEGIN TO CRY...

IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION AT HAND...THE EXECUTION WILL TAKE PLACE AT 0600...TWO HOURS FROM NOW!

SOB...SOB...SOB...



THEY TOOK MARTIN HENDERSON AWAY! THE COLONEL LIT A CIGARETTE! THE OTHER OFFICERS OF THE COURT-MARTIAL SAT UP SILENTLY! ONE OF THEM LEANED OVER AND SPOKE TO THE COLONEL...

I'M...SORRY, SIR! I...KNOW HOW TUGH THIS MUST BE FOR YOU!

SOB TO BE GONE, MAJOR! DISCIPLINE MUST BE MAINTAINED! WE MAY HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY OUT OF HERE YET...



...AND WE CAN'T HAVE ANY OF OUR MEN LOSING FAITH IN THEIR COMMANDING OFFICERS, CAN'T DON'T YOU AGREE, CAPTAIN?

YES, SIR!

GOOD MORNING, SIR!



AS OWEN LIT UP THE OVERCAST SKY, AND THE ENEMY BARRAGE BEGAN AGAIN, A FRINGE GROUP MOVED TOWARD THE SMALL SHED THAT Housed LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON! SUDDENLY THE COLONEL GRESSED FROM HIS HEAD—

SHATTERED...
BEFORE YOU TAKE ANGLECAPTAIN... I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO HIM!

YES, SIR!

THE COLONEL ENTERED THE GUARDED BUILDING...NOTHING THE SENTRY TO MOVE OUTSIDE! HIS SON LOOKED UP AT HIM WITH A TEAR-STAINED FACE...

GO AWAY!
I HATE YOU!

YOU LET ME DOWN,
MARTIN! I WANTED
TO BE PROUD OF YOU!

YOU WANTED TO BE PROUD OF ME!
THAT'S ALL YOU EVER WANTED!
YOU DIDN'T CARE HOW I FELT! ALL YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WAS YOUR OWN POMPOUS SELF!

I'M ASHAMED OF YOU, MARTIN!
YOU'RE A COWARD!

SOME I'M A COWARD! SON, I WAS SCARED STUPID! I HATE YOU! BUT I HATE SON...AND I'M SCARED NOW, TOO! I DON'T WANT TO DIE! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

SHUT UP YOU FOOL! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE!

I... I'M NOT! YOU... YOU'RE GOING TO FIX IT!

IT'S FIXED! LISTEN AND LISTEN CAREFULLY! IN AN HOUR I'M ISSUING ORDERS TO PULL OUT! YOU'LL BE LEFT BEHIND...SO YOU'LL BE ON YOUR OWN!

BUT THE FRINGE GROUP? THEY'RE OUTSIDE!

THEIR RIFLES ARE LOADED WITH BLANKS! WHEN MILLIKEN GIVES THE ORDER TO FIRE, YOU FALL... AND LIE STILL, FOR GOD'S SAKE! YOU'LL BE LEFT FOR DEAD! I WON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO KILL YOU!

BLANKS!

YES! I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU... AND FRANKLY, I DON'T CARE! MAYBE SOMEDAY WE'LL MEET AGAIN! GOOD-BYE, MARTIN!

COLONEL HENDERSON TURNED AND WENT OUT OF THE BRACK ...

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN!

DEAR, LIEUTENANT! LET'S GO!



LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON MARCHED BEHIND THE FIRING SQUAD TO THE LOW HILL THEY'D CHOSEN! HE BREWED A LITTLE CALMER NOW ...

O'LL REAR? HE GRIED HE GRIED ALL RIGHT!

FELLOW HELLY?

HE DON'T SEEM SO SCARED NOW!



THE SQUAD HALTED SOME YARDS FROM THE ENEMYMENT, AND THE LIEUTENANT AND THE CAPTAIN CONTINUED ON! SEVERAL OFFICERS STOOD TO ONE SIDE, WATCHING THE SCENE ...

ANY LAST REQUEST, LIEUTENANT?

I'D LIKE A CIGARETTE, CAPTAIN!



THE CAPTAIN PLACED A CIGARETTE IN LIEUTENANT HENDERSON'S MOUTH AND LIT IT! THE LIEUTENANT PUFFED IT SLOWLY ...

WOULD YOU PREFER TO BE BUNDFOLDED, LIEUTENANT?

WATHANKS! I'LL WATCH!



THE CAPTAIN RETURNED TO THE FIRING SQUAD AND BURNED THE ORDER TO GET READY! MARTIN HENDERSON SEARCHED THE OBSERVERS, FINALLY FINDING HIS FATHER! HE GRINNED AT HIM ...

AIM!



THE COLONEL SMILED SLIGHTLY AT HIS SON, WHO WINKED BACK KNOWINGLY ...

FIRE!



THE FIRING SQUAD'S RIFLES BARKED AND THE 30 CALIBRE LEAD FLOES HIPPIED THROUGH THE LIEUTENANT'S BODY ... KILLING HIM INSTANTLY! THE GRIN FROZE ON HIS FACE AS HIS EYES BLAZED AND HIS LEGS MELTED TO THE GROUND ...



AS THE COLONEL TURNED AWAY, THE CAPTAIN PATTENED HIM ON THE BACK ...

AT LEAST YOU CAN BE PROUD OF THE FACT THAT YOU CONFRONTED HIS DEATH LIKE A MAN, SIR!

I ... FELT THAT HE WOULD, CAPTAIN!



THE END



His uncle planned to change the provisions of his Will. Young Canfield had the information first-hand from his uncle's lawyer . . . last week's bitter fight was undoubtedly the reason. At all costs he must keep that last Will and Testament from being altered. Canfield thought to himself. For years he had looked forward to inheriting one-half of his uncle's vast estate, and now this last-minute change of mind, occasioned by their furious disagreement, threatened to cut off young Canfield without a dollar!

The knob turned easily under Canfield's hand; the door opened noiselessly and he stepped into his uncle's second floor library. The old man looked up in bewilderment, his hawk-eyes glittering suspiciously.

"W-What do you . . . ?"

Before he could complete the question, his nephew had lunged across the room and scooped up the massive iron paperweight which dominated one side of the desk. Without pausing for an instant, young Canfield hurled it directly at his uncle's head. There was a sickening *crunch* . . . then the old man, his head a bleeding pulp, lurched to his feet. His lips worked spasmodically, but not a sound issued forth. The old man sprawled his length on the carpet.

Trying to avoid the blood which spattered from the old man's head wound, Canfield lugged the corpse out of the library. His hands around the old man's ankles, he was dragging his victim up the wooden attic steps when he heard a curious rattling sound. Startled,

young Canfield whirled and saw a sheet of paper settling to the floor at the base of the attic steps. *Something the old man must've been writing at the moment I interrupted him,* Canfield thought to himself. *I'll get it . . . and burn it . . . after I've stowed the body in the attic!*

It was ten minutes later that young Canfield, satisfied with the hiding place he had found for the body, started to descend from the attic. On the very first step his foot encountered a slick spot and his legs shot out from under him. With his arms flailing and a scream of surprise issuing from his lips, Canfield plunged headlong down the stairway. He and his thrill wall stopped simultaneously on the landing below the attic. A look of surprise seemed to animate Canfield's face, but except for that he remained strangely still. His neck was broken.

From the back of Canfield's head, where it had struck the solid floor, blood oozed in a thin trickle. It merged with the rapidly darkening trail which made a distinct path from the inside of the old man's library to the attic above. It was his uncle's blood . . . warm and still fluid . . . on which young Canfield had skidded. Ironically, it was his victim's own blood which led to young Canfield's sudden downfall! And to his *death*!

Looking down his vesting, fingers lay the sheet of paper which Canfield's uncle had clutched even after life had left his body. Across it, in a wavering handwriting, were the words:

"Knowing that I cannot survive this most recent stroke, I, Wendell Canfield, do hereby alter my last Will and Testament, as dictated to my lawyers only two days ago. To my impetuous nephew, Meredith Canfield, I therefore leave my entire estate . . ."

ALIBI!

As they wedged through the rain in single file, Merrick thought to himself: it was right HERE, only a month ago, that the two prospectors' bodies were discovered. The story going around was that the poor dirt-eaters had been overrun by the band of killers who roamed these frontlands. The two miners had been struggled to death, their gold dust stolen. Just the alibi Merrick needed!

Merrick's eyes slowly focused on the rain-soaked shirt weaving in front of him. They were each using a thousand dollars in dust... be awful nice if Merrick could finish this job with *both* thousands! The idea had been fermenting in his mind for weeks, and the memory of those two strangled prospectors crystallized the thought. Socially Merrick glanced about him... not a soul in sight... not even rumbleweed scudding across the rain-swept horizon! It was now or never!

The fight was never gentling than he had expected... his partner had somehow anticipated the downward plunge of Merrick's axe, for he swerved at the last moment and the blade skidded past his skull. Weak as they were from weeks of maggory food and makeshift shelter... from hours of arduous toil in the searing sun and the lashing of sudden and tempestuous rainstorms... the two men were able to call on hidden reserves of strength which even *they* did not know existed. For it was obvious from the first moments of onslaught that only one of them would survive!

It seemed agonized hours later that Merrick's fingers finally tightened around his partner's throat, and he felt the man *tip* and slump backward. The epic struggle had completely exhausted him... his clothing was re-

moiled and blood-flecked, his lacinated arms hung limply at his sides. Slowly, painfully, he wobbled to his feet and opened the soggy knapsack which had fallen to the ground. His mud-caked face relaxed in a haggard grin as he removed a long soup of damp leathie. Nice of his partner to carry it along and furnish Merrick with such a wonderful *alibi*!

As last Merrick's fumbling fingers completed their task, the leathery noose circled tightly around his victim's throat. Then Merrick wrapped the remaining leather wrap around his own throat. Not tight enough to choke, yet firmly enough to appear as if *that* was its purpose. After he had buried the gold in an obscurely marked grave, he sank to the wet ground beside his dead partner. A fleeting thought ran through his mind before he dozed off into exhausted sleep... other miners, soon passing along this path, would find the two bodies and conclude that once again the marauding killers had struck. They would rejoice at Merrick's survival... and he could return later to recover the fortune!

Across later he awoke, conscious of fiery heat drumming against his flesh. The rain had stopped, the sun burned down mercilessly. Instinctively he reached for the noose at his neck, knowing he had to relieve the drowning sensation which enveloped him. Instinctively he clawed at the leather wrap... frantically he tried to gulp air. But even though his life depended on it, Merrick was too exhausted to war it free. Then he understood: his partner's leather had been *rawhide*, which shrinks in the sun after it has been dampened! He had been too *stupid* to notice what kind of leather it had been... and now it was closing around his throat... tighter... tighter...

THIS SCIENCE-FICTION STORY WITH ITS
SURPRISE ENDING SHOULD GIVE YOU A JOLT!

THE MONSTERS!

THE HUGE CLEANING NEEDLE-SHAPED SPACE-SHIP
STOOD LIKE A GIANT TO PAPER POINTING SKYWARD!
ITS ROCKET TUBES STILL GLOWED RED-HOT FROM THE
LANDING THAT HAD JUST BEEN COMPLETED! OFF ON
THE HORIZON, A TINY CLOUD OF DUST ROSE, DRIFTING
LAZILY... KICKED UP BY A JEEP SPEEDING ACROSS THE
ARID WASTES TOWARD THE ALIEN CRAFT.

LOOK AT IT!
ISN'T IT
MAGNIFICENT?

HURRY, MICHAEL!
HURRY!

I'M DRIVING
AS FAST AS
I CAN!

THINK OF IT!
A SHIP FROM
OUTER SPACE
EARTH'S FIRST
VISITORS FROM
ANOTHER WORLD!

THE DUSTY JEEP WITH ITS FOUR OCCUPANTS
BOUNCED AND ROLLED ON THE PARCHED NEW MEXICO
DESERT SANDS, NEARING THE SILVER SPACE-CRAFT...

TO THINK...THAT THREE GENTS AND
MOST OF US WERE DISCOUNTING
THE THEORY THAT LIFE EXISTS
ON OTHER PLANETS...IN OTHER
SOLAR SYSTEMS...

YES! THEN
THEY WERE
RADIO
CONTACT WITH
US, AND SHOOK
THE ENTIRE
SCIENTIFIC
WORLD!



THE JEEP ROLLED TO A STOP BEFORE THE TOWER-
ING SHIP...

IT'S AMAZING HOW WELL
THEY CAN SPEAK ENGLISH,
CONSIDERING THAT THEY
LEARNED IT ONLY IN THE
FEW HOURS OF RADIO
CONTACT THEY HAD
WITH US!

IT APPEARS THAT
PARTNERS ARE
NOT THE MOST
INTELLIGENT
BEINGS IN THE
GREAT UNIVERSE, OH,
GENTLEMEN!



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSE STORY

THE OCCUPANTS OF THE JEEP GOT OUT AND STOOD SQUINTING UP AT THE SHINING SPACE-SHIP...

I WONDER IF THEY'RE VERY MUCH LIKE US?

WE'LL SOON SEE!

FUNNY! SHIP'S LOCKED UP TIGHT!

HELLO, HI THERE!



STILL NO SOUND CAME FROM THE SHIP! THEN...SUDDENLY... A PORT IN ITS SIDE OPENED AND A LARGE METAL SPHERE WAS LOWERED SLOWLY TO THE GROUND...



HOW SEARCH ME! PERHAPS THAT'S ONE OF THEM? NOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

AWFULLY CLUMSY SPACE-SUIT!

AS SOON AS THE SPHERE TOUCHED THE SANDY SURFACE, A LOUD SPEAKER BOOMED FROM THE SPACE-CRAFT...

EARTHLINGS! GO BACK! WE ARE TAKING OFF!



NO! WAIT!

NO SOUND CAME FROM THE SHIP! THE FOUR SCIENTISTS THAT HAD BEEN CHOSEN TO MEET THE OUTER SPACE VISITORS LOOKED AT EACH OTHER...

I THINK SOMETHING'S WRONG!

WE'VE FOLLOWED THEIR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER!

PERHAPS THEY STILL DON'T TRUST US!

I CAN'T SEE WHY!



WHAT'S WRONG? LOOK! WE'RE NOT ARMED!

IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT! IT IS JUST THAT WE HAVE CHANGED OUR MINDS! WE ARE LEAVING!



BUT THERE MUST BE SOME EXPLANATION! WE SPENT THREE DAYS ARRANGING FOR THIS LANDING! ARE THERE TOO MANY OF US EARTHLINGS HERE?

IT IS NOT THAT! YOU TOLD US YOU WOULD HAVE FOUR! NO, IT IS NOT THAT! NOW GET IN YOUR VEHICLE AND GO BACK!



BUT YOU ARE SO MUCH MORE ADVANCED SCIENTIFICALLY THAN WE! TO LET YOU SO NOW, WOULD MEAN GIVING UP A THOUSAND YEARS OF PROGRESS FOR US ON EARTH! THERE IS SO MUCH YOU COULD TEACH US...SO MUCH WE COULD LEARN!

YES, IT IS REGRETTABLE FOR YOU! PERHAPS WE CAN SIMPLIFY OUR REASONS FOR LEAVING SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THEM!





PLEASE DO! THEY ARE! LET US SEE IF WE CAN GIVE YOU AN ILLUSTRATION! SUPPOSE...
I'M SURE THEY CAN'T BE TOO STRONG!



SUPPOSE YOUR RACE WAS FAR ADVANCED IN ATOMIC KNOWLEDGE SO THAT YOU CLAIMED YOU ARE IN OUR RADIO CONTACTS!
YES... NO ON!



SUPPOSE THAT ONE DAY... IN ONE OF YOUR ATOMIC LABORATORIES...
GOOD LORD! LOOK AT THAT RADIATION READING!
THERE'S A LEAK SOMEWHERE! WE'VE ALL BEEN EXPOSED!



SUPPOSE THAT LATER ON, ONE OF THESE SCIENTISTS THAT WAS EXPOSED TO THE RADIATIONS BECAME A FATHER...
DOCTOR! WHAT IS IT? YOU'RE WHITE AS A SHEET! MY WIFE!
MY WIFE IS...
NO, ALEX! YOUR WIFE IS FINE! IT... IT'S THE... THE BABY!



THE BABY IS DEAD!
NO! THE BABY IS ALIVE! BUT... BUT... WELL... WHY NOT SEE FOR YOURSELF!



THE NEW FATHER WAS SHOWN HIS INFANT CHILD...
OH, MY GOD!
I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, ALEX! IT... IT MAY NOT LIVE...



AND THEN, LATER ON, A SECOND SCIENTIST THAT HAD ALSO BEEN EXPOSED TO THESE RADIATIONS BECAME A FATHER...
YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE HOLD OF YOURSELF! THESE THINGS HAPPEN!
BUT DID YOU SEE IT? IT'S HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE!

'AND SUPPOSE A THIRD MON-
STROUSITY WAS BORN TO
ANOTHER OF THE SCIENTISTS
THAT HAD WORKED IN THE
SAME PLANT...'

THEY WARNED US NOT
TO HAVE A CHILD!
THEY TOLD ME
ABOUT ALEX'S
AND BERNARD'S...

THIS
PROVES
IT!



THESE... THESE FIMMER ARE
ATOMIC MUTANTS! THE
RADIATION'S CAUSED THEM!

LORD! LOOK
AT IT! IT... IT'S
DREASTATING!



SUPPOSE THE THREE MUTANTS
WERE TAKEN FROM THEIR
PARENTS AND SENT TO THE
GOVERNMENT LABORATORIES
TO BE STUDIED...

TAKE THIS DOWN, JENNINGS!
DESCRIPTION OF ATOMIC
MUTANT... LAB REPORT NUM-
BER ONE-SEVEN-FIVE-FOUR!
AGE ONE YEAR...



MUTANT HAS AN OVERSIZED GULBOSUS HEAD!
VISUAL ORGANS ARE TINY AND DEEP SET...
COVERED WITH A SLIMY LIQUID! BETWEEN
THE VISUAL ORGANS, A LARGE POINTED
OLFACTORY ORGAN EXTENDS OUTWARD
BRASHPY! AT THE FAR END OF THIS
PROBOSCIS ARE TWO LARGE VENTS
FRIMED WITH FINE CILIA! BELOW THIS,
A TREMENDOUS CAVITY LINED WITH
MUCOUS MEMBRANE CONTAINING A
PROTUSIBLE ORGAN COVERED WITH
TINY WART-LIKE GROWTHS!



HARD, BONY APPENDAGES OF VARIOUS SHAPES
JMT FROM THIS CAVITY AT ITS EXTREME
EDGES... TOP AND BOTTOM! MUTANT'S NOSE
IS POROUS AND COVERED WITH SLENDER,
THREAD-LIKE FILAMENTS! NOSE COARSE
AND THICK! PRESENTLY NOSE BECOMES
DRENCHED WITH FOOL-SHELLING ACIDS
WHICH DOZE FROM POROUS OPENINGS!
OTHER LIMBS DOZE FROM OLFACTORY
ORGAN AND MUCOUS-MEMBRANE
CAVITY!



BODY OF MUTANT IS SHORT AND CYLINDRICAL
WITH FOUR TRIPLE-SECTIONED APPENDAGES!
EACH TRIPLE-SECTIONED APPENDAGE HAS
SEVERAL ADDITIONAL TRIPLE-SECTIONED
APPENDAGES PROTRUSING FROM IT!
THESE END APPENDAGES ARE EACH ARMED
WITH A HORRY SCALE RESEMBLING
A TALON!



MOVEMENTS OF MUTANT
ARE AHHWARD AND... AND...
JENNINGS! WHAT'S
PROOF?

I... I DON'T
FEEL SO GOOD,
DOCTOR!



SUPPOSE THE GOVERNMENT LABORATORIES RAISED THE MUTANTS, STUDYING THEM CLOSELY.

MUTANTS ARE DANGEROUS... FEELING OF OTHER FORMS OF ANIMAL LIFE FOR SUSTENANCE?



MUTANTS HAVE LITTLE INTELLIGENCE! APPEAR HELPLESS... RUTHLESS, SABOTAGE... EVOLUTIONARY.



MUTANTS MAIN LIFE-ORGE APPEARS TO BE REPRODUCTION! OTHER ORGANS ARE SUBORDINATE TO THIS!



MUTANTS APPEAR TO DESPISE AND MALTREAT LIFE-FORMS INFERIOR TO THEIR OWN! IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY WOULD, IF THEY COULD, KILL US!

THEY SHOULD BE DESTROYED! BEFORE THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM!



THE LOOSE-PEPPER IN THE CLEAVING SKY-GIANT BUCKED ON...

WE HOPE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND, FRANKLY, NO! THEREFORE, WHY WE ARE LEAVING!



...WE DON'T SEE HOW YOUR ILLUSTRATION IN ANY WAY EXPLAINS WHY YOU NO LONGER DESIRE TO MAKE PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH US!

STAND BACK!



A BLAST OF SMOKE AND FLAME EXPLODED FROM THE POCKET TUBES OF THE ALIEN CRAFT... SENDING THE FOUR WELCOMING SCIENTISTS SCURRYING TO SAFETY...



ONE SCIENTIST CUPPED HIS HANDS TO HIS MOUTH...SHOUTING ABOVE THE ROAR OF THE ROCKETS...

I DON'T SEE WHAT THESE DISGUSTING MUTANT MONSTERS HAVE TO DO WITH US!



THE MUTANTS WE TOLD YOU ABOUT ACTUALLY WERE BORN!

THE SHIP TREMBLED...



THEY WERE BORN TO MEMBERS OF OUR RACE... ON OUR PLANET!

SO WHAT?



SEE FOR YOURSELF! THAT CAPSULE CONTAINS TWO OF THEM!

THE SCIENTISTS WATCHED THE GRAY TRAIL OF ROCKET EXHAUST DISAPPEAR INTO THE BLUE...

THE ROAR WAS DEAFENING! THE SHIP SHUDDERED...RISING INTO THE SKY ABOVE THE SANDS OF NEW MEXICO...SLOWLY! THEN...FASTER AND FASTER...



CAPSULE?

THAT METAL BALL THEY LOWERED!

THERE THEY GO!

THE METAL BALL WAS MADE UP OF TWO HEMISPHERES! A TOUCH OF A BUTTON RELEASED THEM AND THEY FELL APART...



NOT ME! I'M NOT GOING TO LOOK AT THE UGliest THINGS! NOT UNARMED!

I'VE GOT A GUN! I HO IT UNDER MY SHIRT!

C'MON!



GOOD LORD! A MAN, AND A WOMAN!

THE 'HORRIBLE' MUTANTS THEY DESCRIBED...THEY'RE HUMAN BEINGS!

THE END

HERE IS A STORY, TINGED WITH HORROR, WITH A STARTLING
BLOOD-CURDLING CLIMAX!

THE RUG!

A HORROR
SUSPENSE STORY



CONRAD GARTWRIGHT, THE HEALTHY SOCIALITE SPORTS-
MAN, UNLOCKED THE DOOR OF HIS IMPOSING NORTH-
WOODS RETREAT AND BRUNG IT OPEN! HE STEPPED
ABIDE, ALLOWING HIS SURVE, WILD-MANNERED COM-
PARISON TO ENTER.

WELL, RUGGIE, THIS
IS IT! HOW DO YOU
LIKE IT?

HAMMM! VERY ATTRACTIVE,
CONRAD! BUT WE'RE AWAY
FROM CIVILIZATION UP HERE!
WHAT IN HEAVENS ARE WE
GOING TO DO FOR AMUSEMENT?

CONRAD SMILED AT HIS DEBONNAIR FLIRT-BOY GUEST. HE
HE CLOSED THE DOOR.

IT'LL DO YOU GOOD TO GET
AWAY FROM THE SOCIAL WHIRL
FOR A WHILE, RUGGIE! THERE'S
PLENTY TO DO AROUND
HERE! FISHING... HUNTING...

HUNTING?? HOW
NOW DISGUSTING!



CONRAD LIT ONE OF THE POLISHED KEROSENE LAMPS SCATTERED ABOUT THE LODGE AND THE ROOM GLOWED GHEERLY.

OH... COME, COME, REGGIE? YOU'RE NOT SCOURMISH ABOUT ANYMORE, ARE YOU?

I ABHOR IT! ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU DO THAT TO YOUR VICTIMS!



REGGIE POINTED A WELL-MANICURED FINGER AT A LARGE BEAR-SKIN RUG THAT LAY BEFORE THE FIELD-STONE FIRE-PLACE. THE HEAD OF THE UNFORTUNATE BEAR STARED BACK AT HIM WITH UNSEEN EYES... JAWNS SAID...

WHAT? SKIN THEM AND MAKE FURS OUT OF THEM? WHY A RUG LIKE THAT IS WORTH A FORTUNE!

IT'S HORRIBLE! LOOK AT THE POOR CREATURE'S EYES!



REGGIE SHOOKED AS HE STARED AT THE BEAR-SKIN RUG. CONRAD BEGAN TO LAUGH...

OH, REALLY NOW, REGGIE? THAT BEAR-SKIN'S BEEN TANNED AND THE HEAD STUFFED! THOSE EYES ARE JUST GLASS!

OH! WELL... THEY DO LOOK SO... SO ALIVE!



HOW'D YOU LIKE TO OWN A RUG LIKE THAT?

YOU MEAN YOU'RE OFFERING IT TO ME?



OH, NO! NOT THAT ONE! WE'LL GO OUT TOMORROW AND GET YOU ONE!

NO, THANK YOU! I'D RATHER NOT HAVE ONE, THEN!



DON'T WORRY, REGGIE! I'LL GO TO THE SHOOTING AND SKINNING! YOU JUST COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE!

WELL, I... THAT IS...



TOMORROW MORNING! BRIGHT AND EARLY! I'LL MAKE YOU! NOW I THINK WE OUGHT TO HIT THE RAMP! IT'S GETTING LATE!

LATE? IT'S ONLY TEN-FIFTEEN! BACK IN NEW YORK THINGS ARE JUST GETTING WARMED UP AT THIS HOUR!



THE NEXT MORNING, SHORTLY AFTER SUNRISE, CONRAD AND REGGIE STEPPED FROM THE CRASH INTO THE STILL DEW-LADEN GRASS AND BEGAN MOVING INTO THE THICK WOODS ALONG AN OVER-GROWN TRAIL...

USH! WHAT A BOO-FOR-GOEN! YOU'D BE PULLED OUT OF BED! I'M STILL HALF ASLEEP!

YOU'LL WAKE UP QUICK ENOUGH, SOON AS YOU SPOT A SHEEP!

GOOD HEAVENS, CONRAD! WILL I HAVE TO WATCH YOU KILL THE POOR THING?

POOR THING! THAT'S A LAUGH! ONE OF THOSE BARRED WEIGHS OVER A THOUSAND POUNDS!



YES...YOU'D BETTER WATCH! YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN WHEN YOU HUNT WILDLY! IF YOU DON'T HIT HIM JUST RIGHT HE'LL KEEP COMING AT YOU AND CRUSH YOU TO DEATH!



YOU'VE HEARD THE EXPRESSION, 'BEAR-HUG'? WELL...A BEAR'S HUG IS NO SIGN OF AFFECTION! IT USUALLY KILLS YOU!



A MOVEMENT IN THE THICKET AHEAD OF THEM CAUGHT CONRAD EASTWIND'S EYE...
OH-A-HA-HA! I THINK I SEE ONE!
GOLF!

THE LUMBERING BROWN HULA MOVED OUT INTO THE OPEN! IT STOPPED AS IT CAUGHT THE HUMAN SCENT! IT TURNED...STUDYING THE TWO HUNTERS WITH ITS TINY BLACK BEADY EYES! CONRAD SLID THE BOLT OF HIS RIFLE HOME...



HE LIKE DEES US!
HE'S TOO FAR AWAY! I'VE GOT TO GET CLOSER!



CONRAD EDGED TOWARD THE BEAR! THE FURRED GIANT WATCHED HIM...FURRILY FASCINATED...

COME! PLEASE
SHUT UP! JUST A LITTLE CLOSER... A LITTLE MORE...

A LOW GROWL TUMBLED OUT OF THE BEAR'S THROAT. WARNING THE HUMANS TO KEEP BACK! CONRAD LIFTED HIS RIFLE TO HIS SHOULDER...

NOW!



THE SHOT EXPLODED THROUGH THE SILENT FOREST! THE BEAR TUMBLED OVER, HOWLING IN PAIN! CONRAD CURSED...

BLAST IT! GET BACK, REGGIE! I LONG! MISSED THE VITAL SPOT! HE'S GOING TO CHARGE!



THE GRIZZLY STUMBLER FORWARD... UP ONTO ITS HIND LEGS! ITS BEEHY EYES FLAMED RED AS IT RUSHED AT THE TWO MEN...

MY GOD, CONRAD! SHOOT! SHOOT!



CONRAD WAITED UNTIL THE BEAR WAS ALMOST UPON HIM! CAREFULLY HE SIGHTED ALONG THE GLEAMING BLACK BARREL OF HIS EXPENSIVE RIFLE... THEN...



THE BEAR TRIPPED FORWARD ON ITS BACK, SKIDDING TO A STOP ALMOST AT CONRAD'S FEET! HE SMILED DOWN AT IT...

HE'S A BEAUTY, REGGIE— A REAL BEAUTY!

I FEEL NICK!



CONRAD UNLOADED HIS RIVETING LOOPS AND BENT OVER THE DEAD ANIMAL...

HE'S GOING TO MAKE A FINE MENDOUS HUG, REGGIE! HE... HE... REGGIE?



CONRAD LAUGHED AT REGGIE CLIMBING BEHIND THE NEARBY TREE, REPENTANT! THEN HE CALMLY PROCEEDED TO SKIN THE BEAR...

HEH, HEH! SMATTER, REGGIE? EXCITEMENT TOO MUCH FOR YOU? HEH... HEH...



THAT EVENING, BACK AT THE HUNTING LODGE, HESBIE AND CONRAD SAT BEFORE A ROARING FIRE.

I SEE THE COLORED'S FINALLY COME BACK INTO YOUR CHEERS, HESBIE!

I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER, NOW!



GOT THE SKIN IN THE ICE-HOUSE. HESBIE? THAT'LL KEEP IT FROM ROTTING TILL WE CAN GET IT TO A TAXIDER-MIST!

PLEASE? CONRAD! I'D RATHER NOT HAVE IT!



DON'T BE SILLY, HESBIE! WHY NOT?

IT'S NOT FAIR... INHUMAN!



OH, CLIMB OFF IT, HESBIE! IT'S DONE EVERY DAY! LOTS OF PEOPLE HUNT AND SKIN THEIR KILLS!

IT SEEMED TO BE STOPPED! IT'S BARBARIC!



CONRAD WATCHED HESBIE MOVE DOWN THE HALL AND ENTER HIS BEDROOM! HE LISTENED FOR THE SNAP OF THE LOCK! THEN HE LIT A CIGARETTE AND SMILED AS HE STARED INTO THE DYING FIRE.

YES, YES! HESBIE'S A REAL CHARACTER- SO TOUGH! SO PROUD! THOSE BEAR-SKIN MENS SHOULD BE OUT-LAWED! HUNT! WHAT A RIG!



WELL, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING WRONG IN IT! IF YOU DON'T WANT THE BEAR SKIN HUN, I'LL KEEP IT FOR MYSELF!

I... I'M TIRED, CONRAD! I THINK I'LL GO TO BED! GOOD NIGHT!



CONRAD SAT FOR A WHILE HUNING TO HIMSELF! HIS HEAD NODDED SLEEPY... HIS EYE-LIDS OPEN HEART... NIGHT AS WELL TAWL TURN IN! GETTING TIRED... NO, NOW SLEEP!



SUDDENLY THE SILENCE OUTSIDE THE CARN WAS SHATTERED WITH AN EAR-SPLITTING ROAR! CONRAD JUMPED UP...REACHING INSTINCTIVELY FOR HIS RIFLE STANDING IN THE SHY-GAZE...



WHAT THE...WHAT WAS THAT?
SOUNDED LIKE A...GRIZZLY?

CARTWRIGHT PEERED THROUGH THE CARN WINDOW! OUTSIDE, THE NIGHT WAS THICK AND BLACK! HE SHIELDED OUT THE GLARE OF THE FIRELIGHT...HIS EYES SEARCHING THE SHADOWS OF THE CLEARING THAT SURROUNDED THE LODGE...



CAN'T MAKE OUT
ANYTHING!

CONRAD SPUN AROUND FOR THE MANTLE OF THE FIREPLACE STOOD A POWERFUL, BATTERY LANTERN! HE SNATCHED IT...FLICKED IT ON...FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR...AND SENT ITS POWERFUL BEAM KNIFING OFF INTO THE GLOOM...



WHAT'S THAT? SOMETHING
SKINNING OUT THERE!

THE HUNTER MOVED TOWARD THE GLEAMING OBJECT, HIS GUN READY...



LOOKS LIKE
LOOKS LIKE...

THE LANTERN BEAM ILLUMINATED THE OBJECT MORE AND MORE AS CARTWRIGHT NEARED IT! SOON HE COULD MAKE OUT ITS SHAPE QUITE CLEARLY...



IS IT? IT'S A
HUNTING KNIFE!

SUDDENLY A MASS Hairy Paws, CLAWS BARE, REACHED INTO THE CIRCLE OF LIGHT CLOSING ABRUPTLY ON THE HUNTING KNIFE.



GOOD LORD!
A-A-A...

CARTWRIGHT SWUNG THE LIGHT OVER! THE BLACK MOUNTAINOUS Hairy BEAST LOOKED UP, ITS TINY RED EYES GLOWING...ITS HORROROUS MOUTH CREEPING OPEN...



...GRIZZLY!

GOMRAD DROPPED HIS LANTERN, THE BEAM TILTING CRAZILY! THE GRAY BEAST MOVED TOWARD HIM! HE RAISED HIS BUN, BUT...



YAAAAAHHHH!

FOR A MOMENT, GOMRAD SHRANK BACK... HORROR CRAWLING UP HIS SPINE! THEN HE TURNED TO RUN! THE BEAR UTTERED A LOW-THROATED SHRIEL AND SPRANG AT HIM...



HELP! HELP!
EEEEEEEEEE!

THE HUGE BEAST ENVELOPED THE STRUGGLING HUNTER WITH ITS GIANTIC Paws... CRUSHING THE AIR FROM HIS LUNGS...



A-R-R-G-G-H...
GRORE...
GRORE...

GOMRAD SLIPPED TO THE GROUND... THE BLACKNESS CLOSING IN! JUST BEFORE HE DROPPED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS, HE FELT A STINGING PAIN IN HIS CHEST AS THE KNIFE CUT THROUGH... RIPPING DOWN... AND AROUND...



OH... MY... GOD!
HE'S... HE'S...

IN HIS ROOM, REBBIE STARTED FROM A SOUND SLEEP! HE SAT UP, STARING INTO THE DARKNESS...



WHAT... WHAT IN BLAZED WAS THAT? SOUNDED LIKE A SCREAM!

REBBIE RUSHED DOWN THE HALL INTO THE GARDEN LIVING-ROOM! THE FIRE STILL GLOWED FAIRLY... CASTING IT'S GLEAM ON THE BEAR-SKIN RUG BEFORE IT! BUT NEARBY... BELOW THE CHAIR THAT GOMRAD GARTWRIGHT HAD FALLEN ASLEEP IN... WAS ANOTHER RUG... A NEW ONE.

GOOD LORD! GOMRAD!



ORIGINAL EC COMICS FROM THE 1950s!



REC



CANADIAN

SUSPENSTORIES

**COLTING TALES OF
TENSION
IN THE
TRADITION!**

STOP IT! PLEASE
WHAT YOU'RE DOING
IS **WRONG!**
ACT LIKE
AMERICANS!

BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE SHOCKING FINAL
TWIST TO THIS GRIPPING TALE OF TENSION...

KICKBACK!

A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY

IT ALL BEGAN ABOUT A YEAR AFTER I MARRIED OSCAR HIGGINS! OSCAR WAS TWICE MY AGE, BUT HIS BANK BOOK SHOWED HIS FINANCES SO I MADE A PLAY FOR HIM! FINALLY I GOT HIM TO PROPOSE TO ME, AND THEN ACCEPTED GODLY! I DIDN'T LOVE HIM! I WAS ONLY INTERESTED IN SECURITY! THEN IT HAPPENED! AS I SAID, IT WAS ABOUT A YEAR AFTER HE'D BROUGHT ME TO HIS ISOLATED HOUSE! OSCAR HAD A **HEART ATTACK**!

WILL HE BE
ALL RIGHT,
DOCTOR?

CAN'T SAY FOR **SURE** FREDA! I'VE **DONE** ALL I CAN! HE CAN ONLY WAIT AND **SEE**! ACTUALLY HE SHOULD BE IN A HOSPITAL, BUT I'M AFRAID THAT MOVING HIM INTO TOWN OVER THOSE BAD-ROADS MIGHT **KILL** HIM!

Jack
Kerouac

OSCAR ALWAYS HAD A BAD HEART! ONE OF THE REASONS I MARRIED HIM WAS THAT I FIGURED HE MIGHT POP OFF ANY MINUTE, AND HIS **DOUGH** WOULD BE **MINE!** ALTHOUGH I ACTED ALL UPSET, I SECRETLY **HOPED** HE WOULD DIE...



HOW IS HE TODAY, DOCTOR?

BAD NEWS, MRS. D! IT'S GOING TO BE PRETTY **TOUGH** ON YOU FROM NOW ON!

THE DOCTOR'S FACE WAS DARK WITH CONCERN! I GOT A LITTLE PANICKY! SOMETHING WAS UP, BUT **WHAT?**

TOUGH? I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

YOUR HUSBAND'S HEART ATTACK HAS LEFT HIM COMPLETELY **PARALYZED, FROZEN!** HE HAS ABSOLUTELY **NO CONTROL** OVER HIS **MUSCLES!** HE WILL BE **BED-RIDDEN** FOR THE **REST** OF HIS LIFE!



AT FIRST I WAS MERELY SHOCKED! BUT AS THE DAYS PASSED, THE FULL REALIZATION OF WHAT OSCAR'S CONDITION REALLY MEANT... AS FAR AS I WAS CONCERNED... HIT ME...

HE... HE'S LIKE A... A **BABY!** HE'S HELPLESS... **ABSOLUTELY HELPLESS!**



OSCAR COULDN'T EVEN **TALK** TO TELL ME WHAT HE WANTED OR NEEDED! ALL HE COULD DO WAS OPEN HIS MOUTH AND CHOKE OUT GUTTERAL SOUNDS WHEN HE WANTED ME...

U-N-H-E-M-P-H! U-N-H-E-M-P-H!

JUST A MINUTE, OSCAR!



OSCAR NEVER HAD ANY FRIENDS, AND LIVING IN THAT ISOLATED HOUSE DIDN'T HELP! THERE WERE NO NEIGHBORS FOR MILES! I HAD NO ONE TO TALK TO! I WAS ALONE... **ALONE WITH MY BROODING, HELPLESS HUSBAND!**

U-N-H-E-M-P-H!

I... I'M **SCARED, OSCAR!** I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU!



OSCAR COULD HEAR ME WHEN I SPOKE! IF HE WANTED SOMETHING, I HAD TO RUN DOWN A LIST UNTIL I HIT THE RIGHT ONE...

ARE YOU **THIRSTY, OSCAR?**

U-N-H-E-M-P-H!

SLEEPY?

U-N-H-E-M-P-H!

HUNGRY?

U-N-H-E-M-P-H!



I COULDN'T LEAVE HIM, NOT EVEN FOR AN HOUR! ONCE A WEEK I RUSHED INTO TOWN TO DO THE SHOPPING! WHEN I'D RETURNED, I'D USUALLY HAVE TO **CLEAN** HIM UP...

OH, LORD! HOW MUCH CAN I **STAND?**



I WAS HIS FULL-TIME NURSE! I HAD TO WASH
HIM.



SHAVE HIM.



FED HIM.

KEEP IT IN YOUR MOUTH! YOU
BLUNDERING IDIOT! LIVING WITH
YOU IS JUST LIKE LIVING WITH
AN IMBECCILE!



IT WENT ON LIKE THAT FOR A YEAR! I THOUGHT
I'D GO OUT OF MY MIND...

WHY DON'T YOU DIE, ALREADY?
WHY DO YOU GO ON LIVING?
DAY AFTER DAY! DIE!

W-H-R-E-R-H?

DO Y'HEAR?
DIE!



FINALLY I COULDN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER! I'D
REACHED THE BREAKING POINT.

I'M GOING OUT! I HAVEN'T BEEN
TO A MOVIE SINCE YOU GOT SICK! WELL,
I'M GOING TONIGHT!



HE STARED AT ME WITH THOSE WIDE, PLEADING
EYES...

YOU'VE BEEN FED! YOU CAN LAST TILL
I GET BACK! GOOD-BYE!



THAT NIGHT I DROVE INTO TOWN AND WENT TO A MOVIE! I FELT A LITTLE BETTER AFTERWARDS! IT DID ME GOOD TO GET AWAY FROM THAT ISOLATED HOUSE! EXCEPT FOR THOSE OCCASIONAL SHOPPING TRIPS, I'D BEEN COoped UP THERE LIKE A *PRISONER*...

HOW WERE YOU WHILE I WAS GONE? ALL RIGHT? WELL, GET USED TO IT, BUSTER! I'M DOWN THERE OFTEN FROM NOW ON!



I LEARNED OVER HIM...TORMENTED HIM...

AN' MATE! ONE NIGHT I'LL GO AWAY AND NOT COME BACK! WHAT'D HAPPEN TO YOU THEN, HUH? YOU'D STARVE! YOU COULDN'T EVEN GET YOURSELF A DRINK OF WATER! YOU'D STARVE TO DEATH!

O-U-U-U-O-GE!



AND THEN, ON ONE OF THOSE FREQUENT ESCAPES INTO TOWN, I MET *NICK*! HE WAS *AND* HANDSOME...AND I WAS LONELY...

THERE'S A ROAD-HOUSE A COUPLE OF MILES OUT! WE COULD DANCE A LITTLE!

I'M WILLING! LET'S GO, NICK!



I SAW NICK OFTEN! FIRST IT WAS JUST FOR LAUGHS...BUT AFTER A FEW DATES, IT GOT SERIOUS...

I LOVE YOU, FREDA! I...I NEED YOU...
OH, NICK! KISS ME...



AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, I TOLD NICK ALL ABOUT OSCAR! HE WAS ANGRY WITH ME FOR NOT TELLING HIM IN THE BEGINNING...

YOU...YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME YOU WERE MARRIED, FREDA!
I...I WAS AFRAID TO, NICK! I WAS AFRAID YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SEE ME IF YOU KNEW!



BUT AFTER A WHILE, HE COOLED OFF...

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, BABY? HUH?
I CAN'T DIVORCE HIM, NICK! I'LL NEAR GIVING UP HIS DOOR! IF HE WERE TO DIE IT'D BE MINE EVERY CENT!



BUT I LOVE YOU, FREDA! I WANT TO MARRY YOU!
BE PATIENT, NICK! BE PATIENT! HOW LONG CAN HE GO ON LIVING LIKE THAT?



AND THEN THE DOCTOR TOLD
ME HOW LONG...

WHY, YOUR HUSBAND COULD
LIVE TO A *HUGE* OLD AGE WITH
THE KIND OF WONDERFUL ATTEN-
TION HE GETS FROM YOU!

"PREGO!"

"DIE?"

SO I MADE UP MY MIND...

WE'VE GOT TO
KILL HIM, HER!
IT'S THE ONLY
WAY!

NO, PREGO!
NOT MURDER!

IT'LL BE EASY,
DARLING! IT WILL
LOOK LIKE AN
UNFORTUNATE
ACCIDENT! I
HAVE A PLAN...

ALL RIGHT!
LET'S HEAR
IT...

THE FOLLOWING DAY, A COUPLE OF MEN CAME TO
THE HOUSE...

WE'RE FROM THE
AJAX CONSTRUCTION
COMPANY!

OH, YES!
COME IN!

I TOOK THE WORKMEN DOWN INTO THE CELLAR...

THAT'S RIGHT! I WANT
BARS ON *EVERY* WINDOW!
I'M SO AFRAID OF THIEVES,
AND MY HUSBAND IS
HELPLESS!

GRAY, LADY! WE
GOT YUH! C'MON,
FISTEY! LET'S
GET TO WORK!

NEXT, I HAD THEM RIP OFF THE OLD CELLAR
DOOR AND PUT ON A BIG THICK ONE...

...AND I'D LIKE YOU TO
INSTALL A *SNAP-LOCK*
SO IT WILL LOCK *SMUT*
BY ITSELF!

ANYTHING YOU
SAY, LADY!

THEN I HAD THE WORKMAN PUT UP SOME SHELVES
IN THE CELLAR...

I WANT TO KEEP
SOME *CANNED GOODS*
DOWN HERE!

SORT OF A
PANTRY, EH,
LADY?

EVERYTHING WAS SET! I STOCKED THE PANTRY IN THE CELLAR WITH CANNED MEATS, VEGETABLES AND FRUIT JUICES! THEN RICK CAME OVER! OSCAR JUST STARED WITH HIS EXPRESSIONLESS EYES, HIS MOUTH DROOPING...

YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME
EMPTY THE CELLAR OF ANY
FOODS I MIGHT BE ABLE TO
USE TO ESCAPE WITH, RICK!

YEAH? I GET
IT, FREDA!

RICK BUSTED A COUPLE OF CELLAR WINDOWS AND
BANDIED UP THE BIG THICK DOOR TO MAKE IT LOOK GOOD!
MEANWHILE, OSCAR... THE POOR SLOBBERING POOL...
TRIED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON...

THE MAN WHO COMES TO
READ THE ELECTRIC METER
IN THE CELLAR WILL BE HERE
IN THREE WEEKS! HE'LL LET
ME OUT!

IF I DON'T
HEAR FROM
YOU BY
THEN, I'LL COME
MYSELF!

U-U-UHMM
H-H-HMM

RICK TOOK ME IN HIS ARMS AND
KISSED ME... RIGHT THERE IN
FRONT OF PARALYZED, HELPLESS
OSCAR! I THOUGHT HIS EYES
WOULD POP RIGHT OUT OF HIS HEAD!

SEE YOU, EYE, TO-DAY!
RICK! HONEY!

THEN HE WAS GONE! I TURNED
TO MY BEDRIDDEN, DROOLING
HUSBAND AND WHISPERED...

"A TERRIBLE 'ACCIDENT'
IS GONNA HAPPEN NOW,
'OSCAR'! I'M GONNA GET
LOCKED IN THE CELLAR!
AND YOU, YOU'RE GONNA
'STARVE TO DEATH'!"

I WENT DOWN INTO THE CELLAR,
AND THE GREAT BIG NEW DOOR
WITH THE SNAP-LOCK CLICKED
SHUT BEHIND ME! I COULD HEAR
OSCAR'S FAINT GUTTERAL DRIES
BEYOND IT...

U-U-UH-HMM!
F-F-F-H-H-H-H

CLICK

I SETTLED DOWN FOR A LONG STAY! UPSTAIRS, AS
THE DAYS PASSED, OSCAR'S BEHIN WAILS AND
BLOOD-CURDLING YELLS GREW HEAVIER AND HEAVIER.

FOUR DAYS! FOUR DAYS WITHOUT
FOOD OR WATER! HE OUGHT TO
BE DEAD BY NOW!

FINALLY OSCAR'S HOWLING STOPPED! SILENCE
CLOSED IN! MEANWHILE, I WAS LIVING ON THE
CANNED SOOPS. IT'D STOWED IN THE CELLAR...

UGH! COLD MEAT? OH, WELL!
IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING!

AFTER THREE WEEKS OF WAITING, GROWING MORE NERVOUS EACH DAY... I HEARD THE DOOR-BELL... UPSTAIRS...

ELECTRIC?
ANYBODY HOME?

HELP! HELP!

I SCREAMED AND YELLED! I PUT ON A BIG ACT!
I BAWLED LIKE A BABY WHEN THE METER-READER
LET ME OUT...

I'VE BEEN LOCKED IN.
SOB SOB! MY HUSBAND
MY HUSBAND.

YOUR HUSBAND IS
DEAD, LADY!

THE COP LISTENED TO MY STORY.

THE DOOR LOCKED
BEHIND ME! I
COULDN'T GET OUT!
I WAS TRAPPED...
TRAPPED!

HOW
COULD YOU
HAD THE
WINDOWS
BARRICAD.
LADY?

I WAS AFRAID!
MY HUSBAND WAS
HELPLESS! I WAS
AFRAID OF PHONE-
ERS! I HAD THE
SNAP-LOCK PUT ON
THE DOOR IN CASE
I FORGOT TO
LOCK IT! AND...
SOB...IT...SOB...
LOCKED ME
IN...

TAKE
IT
EASY,
LADY!

I TRIED TO
ESCAPE! I
FELLED AND
SCREAMED
TILL I WAS
HOARSE!
POOF OSCAR!
SOB...POOF
OSCAR! HE
WAS SO...SOB...
SO HELPLESS!

IT WASN'T
POOF
FAULT,
MARM! IT
WAS AN
ACCIDENT!
YOU
COULDN'T
HELP
IT!

THEY FELL FOR IT! THE CASE WAS CLOSED, AND
I WAS CLEAR! I CLIMBED OUT THE CELLAR, HAD
THE BROKEN WINDOWS REPLACED, AND LOCKED IT
UP FOR GOOD! I NEVER WANTED TO GO DOWN
THERE AGAIN! I KNEW IT WOULD BE A LONG TIME
BEFORE I'D FORGET THAT THREE-WEEK ORdeal...
LISTENING TO OSCAR'S FADING CRIES AS HE SLOWLY
STARVED TO DEATH! I HIRED A LAWYER TO
SETTLE MY HUSBAND'S ESTATE...

SINCE YOUR HUSBAND
LEFT NO WILL, MRS.
WIDOWS...

IT WILL BE SEVERAL
MONTHS UNTIL THE PRO-
CEEDS OF HIS ESTATE
CAN BE TURNED OVER TO
YOU!

DO YOUR BEST,
MR. BENJAMIN!

RICK AND I MET EACH OTHER SOON AFTER! IT WAS ALL VERY PROPER, AND AROUSED NO SUSPICION.

FREDA HIGGS! THIS IS RICK LARIDALE!

HOW DO YOU DO, RICK?

GLAD TO MEET YOU, FREDA!

RICK WAS VERY ANXIOUS TO MARRY ME, BUT I CAUTIONED HIM... WE'VE GOT TO RAFF, RICK! PEOPLE MIGHT TALK!

OHAY, FREDA! ANYTHING YOU SAY!

MEANWHILE, MR. DAVIDSON WAS WORKING ON OSCAR'S ESTATE... TRYING TO SETTLE IT! MONTHS WENT BY! FINALLY, RICK AND I WERE MARRIED! WE STAYED AT THE HOUSE...

I HAVE THIS PLACE, RICK! JUST AS SOON AS EVERYTHING'S SETTLED, WE'LL SELL IT!

OHAY WITH ME!

AND THEN I GOT A CALL FROM NEW YORK! MR. DAVIDSON, MY LAWYER, NEEDED ME THERE TO WIND UP THE ESTATE...

I'LL GO WITH YOU, FREDA!

NO, RICK! I DON'T THINK THAT WOULD LOOK RIGHT! IT'S BETTER GO ALONE!

I WENT WITHOUT HIM! I WAS GONE ALMOST FOUR DAYS! WHEN I GOT BACK...

RICK? I'M HOME! RICK? RICK?

I FOUND RICK IN THE CELLAR! HE WAS UNCONSCIOUS! HIS FISTS WERE BLOODY AND RAW FROM POUNDING ON THE DOOR! HE MUST HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR THE GEMED SOLOS I'D REMOVED, AND THE DOOR WAS LOCKED BEHIND HIM! HE WAS ALMOST DEAD FROM LACK OF FOOD AND WATER...

MY DARLING! MY DARLING!

I NURSED RICK BACK TO HEALTH! BUT SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO HIM WHILE HE WAS IMPRISONED IN THE CELLAR! HIS MIND HAD SHAPPED! HE CAN'T TALK! HE CAN'T MOVE! HE'S PARALYZED! HE JUST LIES THERE... STARVING! HE'S LIKE A HELP-LESS BABY! I HAVE TO FEED HIM, WASH HIM...

SHAVE HIM! HE'S COMPLETELY OUT OF HIS MIND! A BABBING IDIOT! OSCAR... AT LEAST... COULD UNDERSTAND ME WHEN I SPOKE...

THE END

THE WIND-UP TO THIS SCIENCE-FICTION
YARN SHOULD GIVE YOU QUITE A JOLT...!

GEE, DAD... IT'S A DAISY!!

LIEUTENANT STARLEY LINDEN, ASTRO-MAYOR OF THE EXPLORATION ROCKET-SHIP *DISCOW-8*, BYED THE DISCOW CONTAINER HALF-FILLED WITH SOIL THAT RESTED BENEATH THE GLOWING INFRA-RED TUNIC NEAR HIM. LIEUTENANT ARNOLD HARTLY, ROCKET-ENGINEER, BUSIED HIMSELF WITH ANOTHER CONTAINER, THIS ONE FILLED WITH FLOWERS...

WHAT'S THIS, HARTLY?
YOU STARTING
ANOTHER FLOWER-
BOX?

THAT'S RIGHT! SAY
88-SECTIONS, LINDEN!



LIEUTENANT LINDEN MOVED TO LIEUTENANT HARTLY'S SIDE AND WATCHED AS ARNOLD CAREFULLY PINNED THE FLOWERING PLANT HE HAD CULTIVATED...

BOY? YOU CERTAINLY
ARE 8888 ON THESE
THINGS, HARTLY! WHAT'S
THIS ONE CALLED?

DON'T TOUCH! THAT'S
A SHASTA DASH! LOOK,
STAR! I'VE TOLD YOU
OVER AND OVER! DON'T
TOUCH THE FLOWERS!



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY

LIEUTENANT LINDEN UNRUSHED AND MOVED DOWN THE CREW'S QUARTERS TO A SMALL GROUP OF OFFICERS BATHERED AROUND A CARD TABLE.



DEAL ME IN, SERGE!

SURE THING, STAR!

HEY! I HEARD HARTLY FLIPPING AT YOU? WHY DON'T YOU LAP OFF?

WH, HE'S NUTS! ALWAYS PUTTERING AROUND THOSE FLOWERS!

SEE, A GUY'S ENTITLED TO *SOME* NOBBY! SO FLOWERS'RE HIS!

YEAH, BUT DOES HE HAVE TO FELL EVERY TIME YOU GO NEAR THEM?

HEY, FELLERS! I GOT AN *IDEA*! THIS GUNT TO GET *FART-BOY* PRETTY REED! LISTEN.



LIEUTENANT HARTLY TURNED FROM WATERING HIS TINY GARDEN, AS THE VOICES AT THE CARD TABLE ROSE...



WH, HOW DO YOU KNOW STAMP? SHE'S PROBABLY FORGOTTEN YOU!

NOT THIS BARE! SHE WAS CRAZY ABOUT ME!

WAS IS RIGHT! NINE MONTHS IS A LONG TIME TO BE DONE!

SHE'S PROBABLY COOLED OFF BY NOW!

LIEUTENANT LINDEN GOT TO HIS FEET ANGRILY...



OH, YEAH? I'LL GET SHE STILL LOVES ME!

I'LL GET SHE DON'T!

YEAH! HE TOO! GO AHEAD! PROVE IT!

LIEUTENANT LINDEN DARTED ACROSS THE CREW'S QUARTERS TOWARD LIEUTENANT HARTLY...



DEAR! I'LL PROVE IT! YOU JUST SIT THERE!

HUMP! WHAT WAIT! DON'T!

LIEUTENANT LINDEN TORE THE SHAGGY DAILY FROM LIEUTENANT HARTLY'S FLOWER BOX AS THE OTHERS COVERED THEIR MOUTHS TO KEEP FROM LAUGHING...



SHE LOVES ME... SHE LOVES ME NOT...

STOP IT! STOP IT! FOR THE HARTING IT!

STANLEY LINDEN DANCED ABOUT THE CREW'S QUARTERS PLUCKING THE PETALS FROM THE DUTY AS ANKLE. HARTLY STUMBLER AFTER HIM... SHOUTING AT HIM...



FINALLY LIEUTENANT LINDEN HELD UP THE PLUCKED FLOWER... ONLY ONE PETAL REMAINED...



LIEUTENANT HARTLY SNATCHED THE MANGLED FLOWER FROM HIS ANKLE... GRABBED IT TENDERLY TO HIS BLANK MOUTH... PLACED IT IN A GLASS OF WATER...



LIEUTENANT HARTLY SPUN AROUND RED-FACED! HE GLARED AT HIS GUNNING NOCKERS...



IT'S THE SHIP! OLD MAN! REPORT TO YOUR STATIONS! WE ARE APPROACHING OUR DESTINATION! SYNCHRONIZED WATCHES! TIME NOW... 2145! LANDING TIME... 2200!



THIS IS IT, FELLOWS! HEY, HARTLY! IF YOU CAN FEAR YOURSELF AWAY FROM YOUR FANNED TO LAND THIS REAP...



C'MON, YOU TWO! OUT IT! WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO!



AT DASH EIGHTH TIME, THE ONION-W CAME TO REST ON THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET THAT HAD MEASURED NINE MONTHS OF HUNTLING ACROSS THE VOID OF SPACE AT TEN TIMES THE SPEED OF LIGHT TO REACH...



OUTSIDE TEMPERATURE... SEVENTY SIX DEGREES FAHRENHEIT!

OXYGEN CONTENT OF ATMOSPHERE SUFFICIENT! NO NEED FOR SPACE-SUITS!

SOON A FORT IN THE SIDE OF THE GIANT STEEL MONSTER OPENED AND A LADDER UNFURLED! ONE BY ONE, THE SPACE-EXPLORERS DESCENDED

ANY SIGN OF LIFE, COMMANDER?



I THOUGHT I SAW SOME SMALL ANIMALS MOVING ABOUT AT THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING!



THE ONION-W HAD LANDED IN AN OPEN FIELD SURROUNDED BY A THICK WALL OF STRANGE VEGETATION...



POORER AVENT, SIR? LOOK! THERE'S ONE OF THE CREATURES NOW!

DICKSON! SET THE AUTOMATIC FRAMES A FOR DOWN HERE! LET'S SEE IF THOSE THINGS ARE INTELLIGENT!

AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE, WHICH WHEN PROPERLY SET COULD TRANSLATE ALIEN THOUGHTS AND SPEECH INTO ENGLISH, SET GOVERNOR DOWN THE SHIP...



SETTING ANY SIGNALS, DICKSON?

NOTHING, SIR! LOOKS LIKE THOSE THINGS ARE NON-COMMUNICATIVE!

THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR WAS ADJUSTED AND READJUSTED WITH NO RESULTS! FINALLY...



OKAY, DICKSON! FORGET IT! PERHAPS WE'LL FIND AN INTELLIGENT FORM OF ANIMAL LIFE WHEN WE BEGIN OUR EXPLORING! NOW, LET'S SET UP A CAMP!

HOT DOGS! WE SLEEP IN THE OPEN TOMORROW! THAT'S A WELCOME CHANGE FROM BEING COOPED UP IN THE SHIP!

BY THE TIME THE SPACE-TRAVELERS HAD SET UP THEIR PLASTO-TENTS, DARKNESS HAD CREPT ACROSS THE ALIEN PLANET'S SKY! IT WAS TOO LATE TO DO ANY EXPLORING, SO...



WHAT SAY WE ALL TURN IN AND GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP? WE'LL START OUT BRIGHT AND EARLY IN THE MORNING!

GOOD IDEA! I'M POOPED!

WE, TOO!

BUT AS MORNING DAWNED OVER THE STRANGE TERRAIN...



COMMANDER! COMMANDER! MAKE UP, SIR!

HUP? WHAT?

IT'S BEGAL! HE'S GONE! DISAPPEARED!

COMMANDER MORRIS, OFFICER-IN-CHARGE OF THE OPERATION, CAME OUT DRIVING PLASTO-TEXT AND LOOKED AROUND AT THE FACES OF HIS MEN, NOW FILLED WITH FEAR...



WHAT HAPPENED?

SEGAL WAS ON THE CLAMP WATCH, WAS?

HE'S GONE!

I... I THOUGHT I HEARD A SCREAM LAST NIGHT

PERHAPS HE WANDERED OFF? LET'S LOOK FOR HIM!



ALL RIGHT! HURRY! YOU STAY HERE AND ESCORT THE SHIP LINDEN! YOU TOO!

THE BEST COME WITH ME!

AS THE SEARCH PARTY STARTED OFF TOWARD THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING, HARTLY GASPED...



S'MATTER, ARNOLD? SEE A FLOWER?

WENT YOU THINK THE CLEARING LOOKS SMALLER THAN IT WAS?

LIEUTENANT LINDEN FOLLOWED LIEUTENANT HARTLY'S STARE...



SO DID YOU'VE AUTO? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME, WACBETH... THAT THE TREES ARE MOVING IN?

I COULD SWEAR THE FOLIAGE WAS FURTHER AWAY YESTERDAY!

SUDDENLY THE SEARCHING PARTY STOPPED AT THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING! THEY WERE STUPEFIED BY SOMETHING ON THE GROUND...



HEY! LOOK! THEY FOUND SEGAL!

G'WON!

HARTLY AND LINDEN SPURTED ACROSS THE OPEN FIELD TOWARD WHERE THE SEARCH PARTY HAD STOPPED! SEGAL... OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIM... LAY BEFORE THEM...



IT'S AS IF HE WERE BURIED TO A CRISP!

SOMETHING SEEMS TO HAVE SUCKED EVERY DROP OF JUICE FROM HIS BODY!

I... I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD!

THEY BURIED LIEUTENANT SEGAL'S REMAINS AND RETURNED TO CAMP! THAT NIGHT, DOUBLE GUARDS WERE POSTED! THEN, TOWARD MORNING, LIEUTENANT HARTLY WAS AWAKENED BY A CRACKLING SOUND...



LINDEN! LISTEN! HEAR THAT?

HUNT MAN IS KEY! SOUNDS LIKE BEASTS! I KNOW! THE AUTO-MATIC TRANSLATOR!

CRACKLING BEASTS!

LEUTENANT LINDEN LEAPED OFF HIS AIR-COY AND OPENED THE FLAP OF HIS PLASTO-TENT! OUTSIDE IT WAS PITCH BLACK! SUD-
DENLY, THE DARKNESS WAS
KIDNEYED BY TWO EYE-SPUTTING
SPINNERS...



THE NIGHT WAS FILLED WITH A
THRASHING AND RUSTLING!
LEUTENANT LINDEN SHOUTED
TO LEUTENANT HARTLY...



THE YELLOW-ARMED BEAM OF
THE SODUM LAMP PUNCHED
THROUGH THE INKY BLACKNESS
SURROUNDING THE CAMP! NO-
THING COULD BE SEEN! THE CLEAR-
ING WAS BARE...



LINDEN AND HARTLY AND COMMANDER MORRIS
STARED AT EACH OTHER. THEIR FACES GLOWED
IN THE SODUM LAMP'S GOLD LIGHT...



THE CRACKLING STATIC STARTED AGAIN...



WHAT
IS IT,
HARTLY?

I WAS
AWAKENED BY
STATIC AND
CRACKLING
COMING FROM
THE AUTOMATIC
TRANSLATOR!
IT'S STOPPED,
NOW!

ARROLD'S RIGHT,
SIR! THE THING
ON THINGS THAT
ATTACHED THIS
CAMP WERE
INTELLIGENT
COMMUNICATIVE
CREATURES!



HARTLY WENT OVER THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR
SPINNING DIALS...FLICKING SWITCHES! SUDDENLY,
THERE WAS A FAINT RUSTLING BEYOND THE
CAMP...IN THE DARKNESS! A SHAPE-LIKE FORM
REACHED INTO THE CIRCLE OF LIGHT CAST BY
THE SODUM LAMP AND WHAPPED ITSELF AROUND
COMMANDER MORRIS'S LEG!



HARTLY AND LINDEN WATCHED, HORRIFIED, AS THE COMMANDER WAS DRAGGED TO THE BASE OF THE STRANGE FOLIAGE THAT HAD CLOSED IN ON THE CREWMEN...

THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN WAS SWALLOWED UP IN THE MOO-LIKE STRUCTURE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ALIEN PLANT! LATER, HIS DRIED AND SHRIVELED BODY WAS DISCOVERED...

HARTLY AND LINDEN STARTED FOR THE SHIP! IN HIS HASTE, LINDEN STUMBLES OVER THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR.



THE TREES! THEIR ROOTS...

INTELLIGENT ANIMAL-EATING PLANTS!



NOW HORRIBLE!

WE'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE!



LET'S GO! MAKE A RUN FOR THE SHIP!

RIGHT BEHIND YOU... DOGS!

THE MACHINE TOPPLED OVER AND LINDEN WENT SPRAWLING! THE CHACKLING STATIS WAS OUT SHORT, AND SHRIIL HIGH-PITCHED VOICES RASPED FROM THE ELECTRONIC TRANSLATOR...

LIEUTENANT LINDEN STRUGGLED TO HIS FEET AND STUMBLED FORWARD! CURILING THINGENT ROOTS SHOT OUT FROM THE FOLIAGE BEHIND HIM, ENROILING HIS LEGS... HIS ARMS...



BUT...HOW CAN YOU BE...SAFE... THAT THE SHE...VINE...IS...YOUR...DEVELOPED...SHRENU?

I WILL PROVE IT TO YOU, VICHNU!

LINDEN! GET UP! LOOK OUT!



HELP! HARTLY! I'M CAPTIVE!

I'LL GET YOU, LINDEN!

HOW CAN YOU PROVE IT, SHRENU? IF YOU WATCH, VICHNU!

LIEUTENANT HARTLY STARTED TOWARD HIS TRAPPED FELLOW SPACE-EXPLORER... THEN STOPPED! HE WATCHED IN HORROR AS LIEUTENANT LINDEN WAS LIFTED HIGH INTO THE AIR BY THE SWIRLING, CLUTCHING-ROOT-VINES...

HARTLY TURNED HIS HEAD AND COVERED HIS EYES TO HIDE THE GORY SIGHT, BUT LIEUTENANT LINDEN'S HYSTERICAL, BLOOD-CURDLING SHRIERS CONTINUED AS THE VINE-ROOTS TORE HIS ARMS AND LEGS FROM HIS BODY, ONE BY ONE! THE SHRIIL VOICE FROM THE ELECTRONIC TRANSLATOR WAS QUITE AUDIBLE...



GOOD LORD! THE TREES ARE TEARING HIM APART!

YAAA...



EEEYAA

SHE LOVES... HE? SHE LOVES... HE...NOT? SHE LOVES...HE? SHE...

THE END



TIME TO KILL!

Charlie Small sneered as he looked at the small vial of fluid in his hand. It contained enough sensitized nitroglycerine to blast his tiny apartment to kingdom-come! With his wife in it, of course!

This little bottle was going to end 6 years of living death, Charlie thought . . . 6 interminable years of nagging and being treated like a kid who was barely able to take care of himself.

"Charr-LEEEE! Stop daydreaming over your packing or you'll miss that 7 o'clock bus!" Edna's screeching startled him and he almost dropped the vial. "I'm ironing your last shirt now, Charlie. It'll be ready in a minute!"

He had to act fast now . . . time was running out! Reaching for the alarm clock ticking away on his night-table, he unscrewed the back and removed the alarm bell, exposing the clapper. Then, with infinite care, he set the deadly vial next to it and replaced the backplate.

His hands trembled as he set the alarm for 7. All at once he was conscious of a knot of anticipation tightening in his throat. When that alarm went off, Charlie mused, he would have committed the perfect murder!

"Hurry up, Charlie! You're as slow and disorganized as ever!" Edna

dashed into the bedroom with his shirt. "Put your tie on," she said in exasperation. "I'll finish your packing!"

Charlie hummed to himself as he adjusted his tie in front of the bathroom mirror. Another day with this insufferable shrew and he'd probably go mad!

Edna had his valise ready for him when he walked back into the kitchen. "It's 6:30 already!" Edna whined. "You'll be late as usual! Don't forget your valise! And make sure you have the tickets . . ."

Brushing his lips against her cheek, Charlie smiled. *This is the last time I'll ever see you alive, Edna,* he thought.

Once outside, Charlie walked up the street . . . then crossed and ducked into a nearby hallway. Dropping his valise, he looked back at the light in his apartment. His wristwatch showed 6:50 . . . the fatal alarm was set to go off in 10 minutes! Just 600 seconds more and the scrupulously careful housewife he hated would be blown to bits!

Unconsciously, Charlie counted off the last minute, second-by-second! 10 seconds left, he gloated . . . 8 . . . 5 . . .! In delicious anticipation of his new freedom, he patted the valise beside him in the doorway. The valise into which hated, hen-pecking Edna . . . careful and precise housewife that she was . . . had thoughtfully packed the alarm-clock from Charlie Small's night-table, at the last minute before his departure!

HIDING PLACE

The ease with which Mike Kleen opened the display case was almost enough to make him laugh aloud. This was the way a job *should* go off—case a job adequately, Mike used to tell his intimates, and the actual lifting itself is a lead-pipe cinch. That held true whether it was a kid you were searching for ransom from some rich geezer's mansion...or priceless gems like these ancient Inca Crown Jewels he had just slipped into the secret pocket of his jacket lining!

According to the newspaper articles which attracted Mike in the first place, the jewels were worth a cool quarter-million! Not a bad day's work, he thought to himself. Now all he had to do was walk casually through the mob of customers being steered around the Museum by the old guides, and he was free and clear.

Not a cop in sight, Mike exhaled as he moved through the Aztec Room...past the vast Mayan Hall...into the chamber which housed the European Torture Devices. Nothing to stop him from sauntering out of the joint, free as a bird...

The weird siren wailing someplace down the hall made him stop in his tracks. A rasping voice echoed down the corridors: "Someone's cracked the Inca Gem Case...the Crown Jewels are missing! Alert the police at the front gates...nobody leaves the building without being searched!"

Mike could hear the sound of heavy footsteps lumbering up the stairs which led to the Museum entrance. That way was cut off! He whirled and started back through the Renaissance Torture Room! Footsteps were hurrying toward him from that direction, too! The joint was sealed up tight! His best bet was to

find a snug *hiding place*! Laying low until the joint closed, he'd stand a good chance of getting away after dark. Of course he *could* just dump the jewels and scam...but it was totally inconceivable that Mike Kleen should abandon the fabulously valuable loot after he had gotten his hands on it!

Footsteps were approaching now along the corridor, probably the cops making a room-by-room search! He turned frantically...at the far side was a metal suit like one of those uniforms he had once seen in a book about some old yegg named King Arthur. It was on the slumpy side, but with a little squeezing Mike could make it!

He squirmed into the suit with just seconds to spare. For the voices were coming right up to his hiding place. Carefully he drew his gun, hardly able to breathe so cramped was he for space. The first guy to step up to him would get a bellyful of lead, Mike vowed grimly.

A voice outside was speaking: "This suit of Mail," it was saying, "is a splendid example of the Metal Renaissance Torture Chamber. By turning this handle I release dozens of razor-sharp spikes...each 6 inches long...which line the inside of the suit from head to foot. They slide inward toward the center with deadly effect!"

Mike gasped just once as the long slivers of metal moved rapidly toward him from all sides. He tried to scream, but the sound was choked off into a death rattle as a long spike drove through his throat. Others were knifing through his face, his arms, his chest...

"A man imprisoned in this fiendish device," the voice droned on, "would be utterly unrecognizable after just one turn of the handle!"

HERE IS AN ELECTRIFYING STORY WITH SOLID IMPACT
IN ITS STARTLING CONCLUSION!

THE PATRIOTS!



**A SHOCK
SUSPENSE STORY**

AN AIR OF EXPECTANCY BLANKETED THE MURMURING CROWD THAT ALREADY HAD BEGUN TO LINE THE SIDEWALKS! A FAINT BRIDGE STIRRED OVERHEAD, RIPPLING THE BUNTING THAT HUNG FROM WIRES STRUNG TIGHT ACROSS THE TOWN'S MAIN STREET...



LAUGHING CHILDREN SCAMPERED DOWN THE SHOTLESS STREET SHOUTING AND YELLING...



FROM FAR OFF, THE FAINT BOOM-BOOM OF A BASE DRUM DRIFTED THROUGH THE WARM SPRING AIR! ALL EYES WERE TURNED...FACING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SOUND...WAITING...STRAINING TO SEE...

IMBERT
TURN-OUT
THE TOWN'S
EYES EVER SEEN!

THOSE GUYS
DESERVE IT!
RODNEY HAS
NO FIDGIE!



A THIN YOUNG WOMAN TURNED TO HER HUSBAND WHO STOOD AT THE CURB-EDGE BEHIND HER.

I'LL BE BACK AS
SOON AS THE
PARADE IS
OVER, DEAR!

WHY DON'T
YOU STAY,
HONEY?



THE DRUMS WILL
BE EMPTIER EVERY-
ONE WILL BE WATCH-
ING! IT'S A GOOD
OPPORTUNITY TO
DO SOME SHOP-
PING!

ALL RIGHT,
HONEY!
I'LL WAIT
RIGHT HERE
TILL YOU
GET BACK!



THE YOUNG WOMAN LEFT HER HUSBAND STANDING AT THE CURB AND ELBOWED HER WAY THROUGH THE CROWD...

EXCUSE ME...PARDON
ME...EXCUSE ME...PLEASE!

SWATTER, LADY...
DON'THSA LOVE
PARADES?



A ROAR WENT UP FROM THE CROWD! WAY UP THE MAIN STREET, SUNLIGHT GLINTED ON SOMETHING SHINY! BRASSY MUSIC ENDED OVER THE THROCK, REVEALING OFF THE BUILDINGS.

HERE COMES
THE BAND!

THERE'S A
DRUM MAJOR
UP IN FRONT!

LOOKIT 'IM
THERE THAT
BATCH!



THE STEADY BOOM-BOOM OF THE BASE DRUM WAS GROWING LOUDER NOW! THE MAN ON THE CURB WHOSE WIFE HAD LEFT HIM TO GO SHOPPING...DOZZLED...

LISTEN
TO THEM
THUM-ETZ!

BOY, I
LOVE BAND
MUSIC!

HEY! GET
A LOAD OF THAT
SOB-POSS!



THE DRUM MAJOR PASSED IN FRONT OF THE SOWL-ING GENTLEMAN...HIS CHROMIUM BATON SPINNING! BEHIND HIM, THE BLARING BAND FOLLOWED...THEIR DRESS-LEGGINGS MOVING IN UNISON...

IF HE DON'T LIKE
PARADES, WHAD
HE COME FOR?

SH-AR!
HE'LL HEAR
YOU!

HEY! LOOK! A
GENERAL!



THE GENERAL, REDECKED WITH RIBBONS, MARCHED IN THE CENTER OF THE STREET...WELL IN BACK OF THE BAND! DIRECTLY BEHIND HIM, A COLUMN OF SPARTANMEN IN CLASS-A UNIFORMS FOLLOWED! THE MAR ON THE CURB'S SCOWL, TURNED TO A SMILE.



LOOK! THEY'RE CARRYING GUNS...
 WITH BAYONETS!
 BOY, SO RARE TO GET ONE OF THEM IN MY SUITS!
 HEY! TAKE A LOOK AT THE CHARACTER NOW!



WHY, I COULD TO...
 TAKE IT EASY, CHARLIE!
 LOOK NOW THEY KEEP IN STEP! DON'T IT LOOK NICE?

NEXT CAME ANOTHER COLUMN OF SOLDIERS! THESE CARRIED NO BARS...



THEM'S THE GUYS WHAT NOT THE PURPLE HEART!
 ALL THEM THAT'S WERE WOUNDED?
 THAT'S RIGHT!

THE SMILE OF THE MAR ON THE CURB TURNED TO A GRIER...



WHAT MAP PERS TO THESE SUITS NOW?
 THEY'RE ALL GETTIN' FURLOUNED!
 CHARLIE! HE'S "FREEBORN" NOW!

LOOK AT HIS NOSE!
 HE MUST BE A FOREIGNER!



TEAM! HIS SKIN'S KINDA DARK, TOO!
 AN' HIS HAIR...

UP THE STREET, HATS WERE COMING OFF! BARE HEADS WERE GARBED BY THE GENTLE SPRING BRIZZES! THE SOLD-GRAD APPROACHED...



IF HE DON'T LIVE IT HERE, WHY IN BLAZES DON'T HE GO BACK WHERE HE CAME FROM?
 CUT IT! HERE COMES THE FLAG!

THE FLAG RIPPLED! ITS CRIMSON AND WHITE STRIPES ROLLED OVER AND OVER! THE BLUE FIELD AND WHITE STARS SPARKLED IN THE SUN-LIGHT! ALL HEADS WERE BARE AS IT PASSED! ALL HEADS HOT DINT



HEY! LOOK!
 WHY, THE DINTY...

THE SMIRKING MAN ON THE COPS
STAYED AT THE RED, WHITE, AND
BLUE...



BUT HE MADE NO MOVE TO TAKE
OFF HIS HAT...



HE JUST STOOD THERE, SMIRKING,
AS THE FLAG WENT BY...



SUDDENLY A PAIR OF CYMBALS CRASHED, AND
ANOTHER PAIR BEHIND THE COLOR GUARD EXPLODED
INTO A BRASS-BLASTING MARCH TEMPO...



WHY'D YOU
SAY, CHARLIE?

I SAID HE MUST
BE ONE OF THEM
LOUSEY REDS!

THE BAND DRUM BOOMED...TIMING THE PARADE'S
STOPS...SPROWING OUT THE AMERY CAT-CALLS...



COMMIE! YEAH!
THAT'S IT HE'S
A COMMIE!

WE OUGHT TO
KICK HIM OUT
OF TOWN!

HENRY!
WHERE
WAS HE?
HOM?

I'M
GONNA
GET
'EM!

THE ONE CALLED HENRY PLOUGHED HIS WAY TO THE
SMIRKING MAN ON THE COPS! HE GRABBED THE
MAN'S SHOULDER AND SPUN HIM AROUND...



BEAT IT, BUDDY!

I'LL GET YOUR
PARDON!

THE OTHERS CROWDED AROUND...

I SAID BEAT IT! WE
DON'T WANT GYPSY LIKE
YOU HANGIN' AROUND!

LOOK! GO AWAY! HERE!
THIS IS A FREE
COUNTRY! I'LL STAY
HERE AS LONG AS
I...



HENRY'S FIST THROTTLED OUT LIKE A PISTON...



THE MAN WENT DOWN, BLOOD TRICKLING FROM HIS SCOWLING MOUTH...



SOMEBODY PULLED A BLACK-JACK...



THE BASE DRUM DOWN THE STREET BEAT OUT A STEADY TEMPO AS THE BLACK-JACK POSE AND FELL...



THE CROWD MOVED IN, SHOUTING PROPHETIES, KICKING, AND HAMMERING WITH CLENCHED FISTS...



THE LAST COLUMN OF SOLDIERS MARCHED BY, WATCHING OUT OF THE CORNERS OF THEIR EYES...



AS THE TRAMP OF THE INFANTRYMEN FADED DOWN THE STREET AND THE MUSIC DIED AWAY, THE SCREAMS OF THE CROWD QUIETED TOO, AS THEY STOOD ABOUT THE PROSTRATE FORM...



THE SOUND OF MUSIC WAS SOMEHOW! THE BUNTING HUNG LIMP AND STILL! THE BREEZE HAD DIED! SUDDENLY THE CLATTER OF A WOMAN'S HEELS ECHOED THROUGH THE THICK SILENCE.



FREDDY? FREDDY?
ARE YOU IN THERE?

HEY! IT'S
HIS BROTHER!

THIS GUY
IS DEAD!
WE... WE
KILLED HIM!

A SCREAM RIPPED INTO THE GATHERING TWILIGHT! THE YOUNG WOMAN FELL ACROSS THE DEAD MAN'S CHEST, SCREAMING HYSTERICALLY.



DON'T WASTE YOUR
FEARS, LADY! HE
WASN'T WORTH IT!

THE GUNMAN
IS DEAD!



AND IT SERVED
HIM RIGHT!
THE GUNNY...

FREDDY? FREDDY?

FREDDY!

THE YOUNG WOMAN TURNED HER TEAR-STAINED FACE UPWARD, STARRING AT THE GRIM ACE GATHERED AROUND HER.



WHY... WHY...
WHY?

WHY DID
YOU DO
IT?

HE WAS A DIRTY
RED, LADY! SNEAKING
AT OUR BOYS' JEST DOWN
BACK FROM OVER
THERE!

AND INSULTING
OUR FLAG!
NOT TAKING
OFF HIS
HAT!

THE YOUNG WOMAN'S BODY SHOOK AS SHE WHISPERED! THEY COULDN'T TELL IF SHE WAS LAUGHING OR CRYING.



HE... HE... HE WANTED TO COME
DOWN... TO MEET HIS OLD OUTFIT...
SO? THEY... THEY... THEY DID THE
BEST THEY COULD PUTTING HIS
FACE BACK TOGETHER AFTER THE
SHELL TORE IT OFF! SO... ONLY WHEN
HE SMILED... IT LOOKED LIKE HE
WAS ENJOYING IT!

OLD OUTFIT?
YOU MEAN HE
HE... FOUND
THERE... IN
FOREHEAD?



WHY DIDN'T HE TAKE
OFF HIS HAT WHEN THE
FLAG PASSED, HAH?
WHY?

HE... HE DIDN'T KNOW!
HE COULDN'T SEE IT!
HE WAS... BLIND!

THE
END

FOR... SHEER, STARK HORROR, READ THIS TERRIFYING TALE...
GUARANTEED TO JAR YOU OUT OF YOUR SEAT!

HALLOWEEN!



A HORROR SUSPENSE STORY

I FIRST CAME TO BRIARWOOD ORPHAN ASYLUM LAST SUMMER IN ANSWER TO A NEWSPAPER AD MR. CRITCHT HAD PLACED! ERAN CRITCHT WAS MASTER OF BRIARWOOD! HE WAS SEARCHING FOR A NATION TO HELP HIM IN HIS TASK OF LOOKING AFTER THE ORPHAN CHILDREN, AND I WAS SORELY THIRSED OF A JOB.



MY NAME IS ANN DENNIS!
I SAW YOUR AD...

COME IN,
MISS
DENNIS!
SIT DOWN!

MR. CRITCHT'S OFFICE WAS A SIMPLY FURNISHED ROOM IN ONE WING OF THE RUN-DOWN BUILDING THAT SERVED AS THE ORPHAN HOME! I SAT DOWN GINGERLY ON THE THREADBARE, WELL-WORN CHAIR HE'D OFFERED ME AND LOOKED AROUND! DUST COVERED EVERYTHING! THE WINDOWS AND FLOORS WERE FILTHY AND NEEDED A THOROUGH WASHING BADLY!



I'VE BEEN TERRIBLY
SHORT OF HELP, MR.
CRITCHT!

I DIDN'T MEAN TO
START, MR.
CRITCHT!

DEAR CRITCHIT WAS FAT AND POMPUS! HIS FLABBY JOWLS SAGGED OVER HIS WRINKLED SHIRT COLLAR, AND BEADS OF PERSPIRATION COVERED HIS DUAL COUNTENANCE.

YOUR JOB WILL BE A SIMPLE ONE, MISS DENNIS! OVERSEERING THE CHILDREN WILL BE YOUR MAIN DUTY!

HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE THERE, MR. CRITCHIT?

THIRTY-FOUR! THEY RANGE IN AGE FROM FOUR TO FOURTEEN! ASIDE FROM SEEING THAT THEY ARE WELL-BEHAVED... AND SEVERELY DISCIPLINED WHEN BAD... YOUR PRIME CONCERN WILL BE IN SUPPLYING THEM WITH AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION! YOU WILL RECEIVE BOARD AND LODGING AND SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLARS A MONTH! WILL YOU TAKE THE JOB?

ALTHOUGH THE SALARY WAS VERY LOW, I WAS FORCED TO ACCEPT THE POSITION! SINCE I'D BEEN OUT OF WORK FOR SOME TIME, MY SAVINGS HAD DISAPPEARED! BESIDES... I HAD CHILDREN...

I'LL TAKE THE JOB, MR. CRITCHIT!

GOOD! I'LL SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM!



MR. CRITCHIT LED ME DOWN A DARK DUTTY HALL TO A DOOR MARKED "PRIVATE". HE TURNED THE KNOB AND THE DOOR SQUEAKED OPEN ON RUSTY HINGES! INSIDE, A TANNED IRON BED STOOD AGAINST ONE WALL! A PAINT-PEELED WOODEN DRESSER STOOD OPPOSITE! ASIDE FROM THESE AND A PLAIN WOODEN CHAIR, THERE WERE NO OTHER FURNISHINGS...

I... I WOULD LIKE A LAMP, MR. CRITCHIT! I READ AT NIGHT!

ELECTRICITY COSTS MONEY, MISS DENNIS! I'LL BRING YOU SOME CANDLES... BUT THEY'LL HAVE TO COME OUT OF YOUR PAY!



I HAD A SUDDEN URGE TO LEAVE! THEN, FROM ACROSS THE COURT BEYOND THE DIRTY CRACKED WINDOW OF MY ROOM, I HEARD THE HEART-BREAKING SONG OF A CHILD CRYING.

I... I SEE! ALL RIGHT! IF YOU'LL GET THEM FOR ME!

CERTAINLY! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK! OH! ONE MORE THING, MISS DENNIS!



MR. CRITCHIT'S FACE WAS STERN... HIS EYES BURNING...

YES, MR. CRITCHIT?

THE CHILDREN ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY, MISS DENNIS! THE BUSINESS OF ROOMING BRIMWOOD IS MINE! YOU WILL DO WELL TO INTEREST YOURSELF ONLY WITH WHAT CONCERNS YOUR...



THEN HE WAS GONE! I STARTED TO UNPACK! MEANWHILE, THE CHILD ACROSS THE COURT CONTINUED TO CRY! A LITTLE LATER, MR. CRITCHIT RETURNED WITH A FEW CANDLES, AND I LIT ONE! ITS CHEERY GLOW PUSHED BACK THE BATHING BLOOD! FINALLY, I COULD STAND IT NO LONGER...

THAT POOR CHILD HAS BEEN CRYING FOR OVER AN HOUR! I'VE GOT TO SEE WHAT'S WRONG!



I PICKED UP THE CANDLE AND WENT OUT OF MY ROOM! I MADE MY WAY DOWN THE DARK MUSTY CORRIDOR UNTIL I CAME TO A DOOR MARKED DORMITORY! THE MUFFLED SONG CAME FROM WITHIN! I TURNED THE KNOB! THE DOOR WOULD NOT OPEN...



U...IT'S LOCKED!

DOO...DOO...DOO...

A KEY HUNG ON A HOOK IN THE DOOR JAMB! I REMOVED IT AND INSERTED IT IN THE LOCK! THE DOOR SWANG OPEN! THE CANDLELIGHT KNIFE INTO THE DARKNESS...

GOOD NIGHT!



IT WAS HORRIBLE! THIRTY-FOUR FILTHY BEDS LINED THE ROOM, MATTRESS TO MATTRESS! FAUNT FACES PEERED AT ME WITH WIDE FRIGHTENED EYES! THE CHILD THAT WAS CRYING WHINED ON A BED AT THE FAR END OF THE ROOM! I MOVED DOWN THE LITTERED AISLE TOWARDS IT...



HELLO?

A NEW NATCHO?

MAYBE TWO OR WON'T BEAT IT!

SHE LOOKS NICE!

THAT DON'T REAR NOTHIN!

WH...WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

I IGNORED THEIR REMARKS IN MY CONCERN OVER THE SORROWING CHILD! IT WAS A YOUNG GIRL...SIX OR SEVEN! WHEN I PLACED MY HAND ON HER SHOULDER TO COMFORT HER, SHE SCREAMED...

I...I WON'T HURT YOU, DEAR!

GO...GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE!



WHAT IS IT CHILD? WHAT HURTS YOU?



IT'S HER STOMACH LADY! SHE CRIES LIKE THAT AFTER EVERY MEAL.

DID YOU EAT TOO MUCH, HONEY?



THAT'S A LAUGH! EAT TOO MUCH! WE DON'T GET HARDLY ANYTHING TO EAT!

SOMEONE'S ALWAYS GETTING SICK FROM THE FOOD!



WE NEVER GET ANY MEAT!

THE MEAT ALWAYS SMELLS FUNNY!

I LOOKED AROUND AT THE PALE BUNKEN FACES BEFORE ME! THEY WERE THE MALLOW FACES OF UNDERNOURISHED CHILDREN...TWIN AND WHITE FROM WANT OF GOOD FOOD! THEIR BELLIES WERE BLOATED...THEIR ARMS AND LEGS LIKE STICKS! I COMFORTED THE SICK CHILD...TALKED TO THE OTHERS...

MY NAME IS MISS DENNIS! I'M GOING TO SEE THAT YOU'LL BE WELL TAKEN CARE OF FROM NOW ON!

WOMAN'S NAME THE LAST LADY SAID WHEN SHE FIRST CAME! SHE TURNED OUT TO BE JUST LIKE ME!



I TOLD YOU, MISS DENNIS! ROOM-AND-BATHWOOD IS MY BUSINESS! THE CHILDREN ARE YOURS!

WHEN A CHILD DIES HALF THE NIGHT FROM HUNGER, THEN FEEDING THEM BECOMES MY BUSINESS, MR. CRITCHIT!



I DO THE BEST I CAN MISS DENNIS! I'M ALLOWED ONLY 50 MUON PER CHILD! FOOD PRICES HAVE RISEN! THE ALLOTMENTS HAVEN'T!

I... I'M SORRY, MR. CRITCHIT! I DIDN'T KNOW!



THE NEXT MORNING, I WENT TO SEE MR. CRITCHIT IN HIS OFFICE...

MRS. MISS DENNIS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHY AREN'T YOU MAKING BREAKFAST WITH THE CHILDREN?

BREAKFAST, YOU CALL IT? I REFUSED WHEN I TASTED IT! IS THAT THE BEST YOU CAN FEED THEM, MR. CRITCHIT?



AND SO, BESIDES THE OTHER DUTIES I HAD, I VOLUNTEERED TO BUY AND SUPERVISE THE PREPARATION OF THE FOOD FOR THE CHILDREN FROM THE MEAGER AMOUNT MR. CRITCHIT GAVE ME EACH WEEK.

THAT WILL BE SIXTEEN DOLLARS, MRS. DENNIS! THAT'S TOO MUCH! I ONLY HAVE TWELVE! WHAT HERE? HERE'S FOUR MORE!



I PAID THE EXTRA MONEY FROM MY OWN POCKET! I COULDN'T HELP IT! THE GAUNT FACES OF THE CHILDREN PLAGUED MY MIND! I DIDN'T TELL MR. CRITCHIT ABOUT IT! SO SUMMER PASSED AND AUTUMN DREW NEAR, THEIR LITTLE BODIES BEGAN TO FILL OUT! THEN, ONE DAY...



BUT... BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, MR. CRITCHIT! THE CHILDREN BARELY HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT NOW!

I'M AWARE OF THAT, MISS DENNIS! AND YOUR WISE SHOPPING AND CAREFUL SUPERVISION HAVE DONE WONDERS! BUT THAT'S THE SITUATION! I'M SORRY!



BESIDE THE FOOD PROBLEM, ANOTHER CONDITION BECAME INTOLERABLE FOR ME! THE CHILDREN'S CLOTHES! THEIR GARMENTS WERE ALL-FITTING AND RASSED! I'D PATCHED AND REPATCHED THEM...



OH, TOMMY! ANOTHER TORN PAIR OF PANTS!

...I'M SORRY, MISS DENNIS! I COULDN'T HELP IT! I JUST BENT OVER... AND... SOB... AND...

MR. CRITCHIT GAVE ME VERY LITTLE FOR CLOTHES TOO... FAR TOO LITTLE TO BUY WHAT WAS NEEDED! ON MY DAYS OFF, I FOUND MYSELF PUSHING DOORBELLS...



I'M FROM BRIMWOOD CEMETARY ANYWAY! I WONDER IF YOU WOULD HAVE SOME OLD CLOTHES YOUR CHILDREN HAVE OUT-GROWN?

SORRY, LADY! THAT'S AN OLD RACKET!

AS FAR AS THE SANITARY CONDITIONS AT THE HOME WERE CONCERNED, I SOLVED THAT PROBLEM HAPPILY! THE CHILDREN WERE EASILY RECRUITED INTO RACKET AND HO! BRAGGERS AND WE RENDERED BRIMWOOD CLOUTLESS...



YOU'VE DONE ADMIRABLY, MISS DENNIS!

I DO MY BEST, MR. CRITCHIT!

BY SEPTEMBER, I'D ALREADY SPENT MY SALARY ON SUPPLEMENTING THE CHILDREN'S FOOD, CLOTHING, AND EDUCATION ALLOWANCES! BUT I DIDN'T MIND! IT'S SPORN SO FOND OF THEM...



YOU'RE WONDERFUL, MISS DENNIS!

PLEASE! WE'RE SO LUCKY TO HAVE YOU!

AND THEN OCTOBER ROLLED AROUND! THE NIGHTS BECAME DRILLY, BUT MR. CRITCHIT SUPPLIED NO HEAT! I COMPLAINED...



WE'VE GOT TO CONSIDER OUR FUEL, TELL ME REALLY NEED IT, MISS DENNIS!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, MR. CRITCHIT!

TOWARD THE END OF OCTOBER, MY MONTH'S SALARY RAN OUT AGAIN! THE CHILDREN BEGAN TO DROOP UNTIL HINTS! HALLOWEEN WAS COMING...



DO YOU THINK MR. CRITCHIT WOULD LET US CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN, MISS DENNIS?

I DON'T KNOW, BUT...

JUST ONE PUMPKIN, WITH A GARDLE IN IT! IT'D BE SO MUCH FUN!

BUT WHEN I APPROACHED MR. CRITCHIT ABOUT THE PUMPKIN, HE SHOOK HIS HEAD...



NO! I'M SORRY, MISS DENNIS! WE HAVE NO MONEY TO THROW AWAY ON TRIVIALITIES LIKE PUMPKINS!

BUT IT WOULD MAKE THE CHILDREN SO HAPPY, MR. CRITCHIT!

BUT MR. CRITCHY WAS FIRM! HE ABSOLUTELY REFUSED TO SPEND A DIME! THE CHILDREN RECEIVED THE NEWS WITH BITTERNESS.

HE-HE! I'VE GOT YOU! YOU MUSTN'T HATE ME LIKE THOSE CHILDREN!



WHEN OCTOBER THIRTY-FIRST ARRIVED, THE CHILDREN WERE SILENT AND MULEN! OUTSIDE THE ASYLUM GATES, AS DARK BEGAN TO FALL, BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE TOWN...LOOKT ONES WHO HAD PARENTS...HOOTED AND HOWLED IN THEIR HALLOWEEN COSTUMES...

HALLOWEEN! HOODOOOH!



THE ORPHAN CHILDREN CROWDED AROUND THE WINDOWS...PRESSING THEIR NOSES UP AGAINST THE COLD GLASS...WATCHING...WATCHING WITH ENVY...

LOOK! THERE'S A PUMPKIN! GILLY! I WISH I HAD ONE! I... SEE... SEE...



FINALLY, I COULDN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER! I WAS DETERMINED THAT THE CHILDREN WOULD CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN NO MATTER WHAT! I WENT TO MR. CRITCHY'S OFFICE TO ASK FOR AN ADVANCE ON MY NEXT MONTH'S SALARY...



I ALMOST SCREAMED OUT LOUD WHEN I SAW THE FIGURE! IT WAS THREE TIMES AS MUCH AS MR. CRITCHY HAD BEEN SPENDING ON THE ORPHANS! SUDDENLY, THE PICTURE WAS VERY CLEAR...

HE--HE'S BEEN STEALING FROM THE CHILDREN...SKIMPING ON THE EXPENSES AND POCKETING THE DIFFERENCE!



I SAT DOWN TO WAIT! OUTSIDE BRIARWOOD, Distant SHRIERS OF LAUGHTER AND CRIES OF JOY DRIFTED INTO THE HALLOWEEN AIR! SOMETHING ON MR. CRITCHY'S DECK CAUGHT MY EYE! I GOT UP AND LOOKED AT IT...

IT...IT'S A CHECK...FROM THE STATE! NOVEMBER ALLIANCE...FOR THIRTY-FOUR ORPHANS!



THE DOOR BEHIND ME SLAMMED! MR. CRITCHY LOOKED IN THE CALENDAR...HIS FAT ROUND FACE PURPLE WITH RAGE...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO, MR. CRITCHY! YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A DIRTY CRIMINAL, LEECHING ON THOSE POOR ORPHANS!



ALL OF MY ANGER AND RESENTMENT
SPILLED OVER AS I SCREAMED AT
HIM...ACCUSED HIM.

NOW THAT YOU
KNOW, MISS
DEWITT, WHAT
ARE YOU GOING
TO DO?



I'M GOING
TO REPORT
YOU TO THE
AUTHORITIES!

HE CAME AT ME...HIS FURRY HANDS
REACHING OUT...

I...I DON'T THINK
SO, MISS DEWITT!
I DON'T THINK
SO AT ALL!

KEEP AWAY
FROM ME,
YOU...FOUL...



HIS HANDS CLOSED ABOUT MY
THROAT! THINGS BEGAN TO SPIN!
THE SHRIEL ORIES OF CHILDREN
FILLED THE ROOM AS I PASSED
OUT.



I CAME TO WITH SHRIEKS OF DELIGHT ECHOING IN
MY POUNDING BRAIN! I SAT UP! I WAS ON THE FLOOR
OF MR. CRITCHIE'S OFFICE! A SCARING PAIR ENCRICLED
MY THROAT WHEN HIS FAT FINGERS HAD DULIN...



MR. CRITCHIE? I ME...HE'S NOT HERE!

I STUMBLER TO THE DOOR AND FLUNG IT OPEN! THE
CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER AND SCREELS OF JOY WARTED
DOWN THE CORRIDOR TOWARD ME! ONE OF THEM
DASHED BY, GIBBLING, HER TINY, HAPPY FACE SWOOGED
WITH BLURRY CORN.



DON'T WORRY, MARY! YOU'LL
HAVE YOUR PUMPKIN YET!
I'M GOING...TO.

ARRRRR! LIGHT DREPT AROUND THE CORNER OF THE CORRIDOR!
I COULD HEAR THE STAMMING OF TINY FEET COMING TOWARD ME!
MARY LOOKED UP AT ME WITH BRIGHT SHIRING EYES.

OH, THAT'S ALL THAT?
MISS DEWITT! WE'VE
GOT OUR PUMPKIN! NOW!
WE MADE IT OURSELVES!



OH?

THEY TURNED THE CORNER...TRAMPING
TOWARD ME! THE GRINNING PUMPKIN'S
EYES FLICKERED FROM THE GARDLE LIT
INSIDE! BUT AS THEY REARED, A COLD
KNIFE OF HORROR SLIDED DEEP INTO MY
CHEST! YES, THE CHILDREN HAD THEIR
PUMPKIN! MR. CRITCHIE'S HOLLOWED
HEAD LEERED UP AT ME...IT'S EYES
AND NOSE CUT AWAY TO PERMIT THE
LIGHT TO SHINE THROUGH.



BOOO
LOOO!

THE
END

FAMOUS 1950s EC COMICS!



NO. 3
MAR



1.50

1.00

CANADA

SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES

**THRILLING TALES OF
TENSION**
IN THE
TRADITION!



THE SHOCKING WIND-UP TO THIS ELECTRIFYING TALE
WILL JOLT YOU OUT OF YOUR SEATS!

Just **DESSERTS!**

**A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY**



BERNARD UNLOCKED THE BATHROOM DOOR AND HUR-
 RIED INTO THE DINING ROOM! HIS GUESTS SAY
 ABOUT THE TABLE IN SILENCE! NO ONE STIRRED!
 BERNARD GRINNED AT THEM...

I'M SORRY I WAS GONE
 SO LONG! I JUST WANTED TO
 CLEAN UP A BIT BEFORE
 WE TALKED THINGS OVER!
 YOU DON'T MIND, DO YOU?



BERNARD LOOKED AT EACH GUEST! THERE WERE FIVE
 OF THEM AT THE TABLE, BESIDE HIMSELF! THERE
 WAS HIS WIFE, CORA, HIS BEST FRIEND, IVYING, HIS
 OLD-MAN AUNT, CLORINDA, HIS BUSINESS PARTNER,
 IVING, AND A HORSE NAMED FANNY.

I SUPPOSE THIS DINNER
 HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT OF A
 SHOCK TO ALL OF YOU!
 YOU'RE ALL SO GRAY? NOW!



WELL, I CAN'T SAY I BLAME
 YOU! SHALL I TELL YOU HOW ALL
 THIS CAME ABOUT? WOULD YOU
 LIKE TO KNOW WHY YOU'RE ALL
 HERE... LIKE THIS?



BERNARD LIT A CIGARETTE AND
 MOVED AROUND THE TABLE BEHIND
 HIS GUESTS! HE STOPPED IN
 BACK OF FANNY, THE HORSE,
 WHO'D ONCE WORKED FOR HIM.



I'LL START WITH
 FANNY, FANNY! YOU
 REMEMBER WHEN
 I HIRED YOU.

AND I INTRODUCED YOU TO JIMMY.

THIS IS MY SON, JIMMY,
 FANNY! YOUR JOB WILL BE
 TO LOOK AFTER HIM.



AT LEAST YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO LOOK AFTER
 HIM! JIMMY WAS A GOOD BOY! HE LOOKED JUST LIKE
 MY FIRST WIFE, TOO! REMEMBER HOW YOU USED TO
 TAKE HIM FOR STROLLS?



OH, BEAUTIFUL! THAT'S
 A NICE HORSE YOU'VE GOT
 THERE!

IT AIN'T A HORSE,
 HANDBONE! I TAKE
 CARE OF LITTLE
 BOYS!

REMEMBER THE DAY IT HAPPENED, FANNY? YOU WERE
 REALLY CLEVER, WEREN'T YOU? YOU STRAPPED
 JIMMY IN HIS STROLLER SO HE WOULDN'T WANDER OFF
 WHILE YOU FLIRTED WITH YOUR BOY-FRIEND.

WHAT TIME DO YOU GET
 OFF TONIGHT, BABY?

ABOUT EIGHT!
 SOMING TAKE ME
 SOMEPLACE?





REALLY CLEVER. WASN'T IT? YOU WERE SO BUSY MAKING EYES AT YOUR LATEST FIND, YOU NEVER NOTICED THE STROLLER BEGIN TO ROLL.

WHERE'D YOU LIKE TO GO, BABY?

SOMEPLACE WHERE A MENT-GEM, MAYBE.



YOU'VE FORGOTTEN TO PUT ON THE BRAKE! THE SIDEWALK WASN'T LEVEL! THE STROLLER ROLLED RIGHT OFF THE CURB.

GEE, BABY? MAYBE YOU'D BETTER LOOK FOR A NEW EXPENSIVE GIRL-AND-GO!



...RIGHT INTO THE PATH OF A SPEEDING TRUCK!



BERNARD STOOD OVER FANNY, GLARING DOWN AT HER.

WHY'D HE *ALIVE* TODAY, FANNY? HE'D BE ALIVE TODAY IF YOU HAD USED A LITTLE *SENSE*! IT WAS A STUPID THING TO DO! STUPID!



NEXT TO FANNY SAT JULIUS THOMPSON, BERNARD'S OLD BUSINESS PARTNER. BERNARD PATTED HIS SHOULDER.

DEAR JULIUS! WHAT TROUBLES YOU CALLED WHEN YOU WIPED ME OUT?



"OH, YES? I *WANT* YOU ENGINEERED THE WHOLE SCHEME! YOU WEREN'T AS CLEVER AS YOU THOUGHT! YOU FORGOT ABOUT OUR DETECTION SYSTEM!"

THAT'S RIGHT! JUST *PAD* YOUR BILLS TO OUR COMPANY! I'LL OWE THEM AND GIVE YOU TWENTY PERCENT!

BUT YOU'LL GO BROKE FAST IF I DO THAT, JULIUS!



"YOU NEVER SHOULD HAVE PLANNED YOUR DIRTY DEALS RIGHT IN OUR OFFICES, JULIUS!"

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WANT TO HAPPEN, JOE! I WANT TO Wipe BERNIE OUT...

OKAY, JULIUS! I'LL DO WHAT YOU WANT! BUT WE BETTER MAKE THAT TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT!

BERNARD STARED DOWN AT HIS OLD-WARD AUNT, CLORISSA.

THAT'S WHEN I CAME TO POO.
AUNT CLORISSA? REMEMBER?
I TOLD YOU THE WHOLE STORY!
I TOLD YOU THAT IF I COULDN'T
RAISE FIVE THOUSAND
DOLLARS, I'D BE BANKRUPT.

"REMEMBER WHAT YOU TOLD ME, AUNT CLORISSA?
REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID..."

FOOD FOR YOU, BERNIE?
SERVES YOU RIGHT? I
TOLD YOU YOU'D END UP
A MORTGAGEE FRUMP!

BUT AUNT CLORISSA? I
CAN BEAT THEM! FIVE
THOUSAND! THAT'S ALL
I NEED! IT WILL PULL
ME THROUGH TILL I
CAN PROVE THAT JULIUS
IS BEYOND THIS SCHEME!

BUT YOU WERE TOO STUPID TO
UNDERSTAND YOU SAID THERE, JULIUS
WAS YOUR BANKBOSS... AND REFUSED.

NOT ONE RED
CENT, BERNARD?
NOT A DIME?

PLEASE, AUNT
CLORISSA? USE
YOUR HEAD!
YOU'LL GET YOUR
MONEY BACK...
WITH INTEREST!

YOU LET ME SINK, DIDN'T YOU
CLORISSA? YOU LET ME GO DOWN!
WHEN JULIUS BROUGHT IN THE
AUDITOR, I NEVER LET ON THAT
I KNEW... DID I... ALMOST...

THAT'S THE STORY...
BERNIE? WE'VE
THROUGH
WASHED UP?

YOU'LL
HAVE TO
DECLARE
BANKRUPTCY.
SIR!

THIS... THIS LEAVES
ME FLAT BROKE.
JULIUS? I'M
POORER!

I'M... SORRY.
BERNIE? THANK
GOODNESS,
I HAVE A
LITTLE SOMETHING
TO FINE
ME OVER!

LITTLE SOMETHING? YOU WERE BACK IN BUSINESS
INSIDE TWO MONTHS? AND YOU THOUGHT I WAS
STUPID? YOU THOUGHT I DIDN'T KNOW? IT WAS
YOU WHO WAS FOOLISH, JULIUS! IT WAS YOU WHO
DIDN'T USE YOUR HEAD!

"REMEMBER WHEN WE MET ON THE STREET, AND I
INVITED YOU TO THIS DINNER PARTY."

WELL, BERNIE? HOW
YOU DOING? LATELY?
LONG TIME NO SEE?

JULIUS! WHAT A STROKE
OF LUCK! I'M HAVING A
DINNER PARTY NEXT
WEEK! YOU'RE INVITED...
FOR OLD-TIMES SAKS!

AND YOU SAID, DIDN'T YOU? YOU **FOOL**, YOU **STUPID FOOL**? WHAT DID YOU **EXPECT** WHEN YOU GOT HERE? WHAT DID YOU **ALL** EXPECT? DID YOU THINK I INVITED YOU HERE OUT OF LOVE, **FRIEND-SHOP**? DON'T YOU KNOW I **DEBATED** EACH OF YOU FOR WHAT YOU **DID** TO ME?



BERNARD MOVED AROUND THE TABLE STAYING AT EACH OF THE FIVE PEOPLE SEATED BEFORE IT? HE STOPPED BEHIND HIS WIFE AND LIT ANOTHER CIGARETTE...

DEAR, SWEET, **STUPID CORA**? MY **LOVING** WIFE? YOU NEVER **SUSPECTED** I KNEW ABOUT YOU AND IRVING, DID YOU?



BERNARD'S FACE GREW DARK? HE **IMAGED** AT CORA.

WELL, I **KNEW** IT ALL THE TIME, CORA? YOU DIDN'T **FOOL** ME FOR A **MINUTE**? I **KNEW** WHAT YOU WERE DOING **BEHIND** MY **BACK**!



IRVING SAT NEXT TO CORA? HE MADE NO SOUND, NO OUTCRY OF **OBJECTION**...

SURPRISED, AWOKE YOU **THOUGHT** YOU WERE **SAFE**? YOU **THOUGHT** I'D NEVER **SUSPECT** MY **BEST FRIEND** OF TRYING TO **STEAL** MY **WIFE**!



HOW IGNORANT YOU BOTH WERE! HOW **BLIND**? WHY, I EVEN REMEMBER THE **RIGHT** HOUR LITTLE **AFRICA** BEGAN? WE'D BEEN OUT TOGETHER... JUST THE THREE OF US! **REMEMBER**...

LET'S GO, IRVING! BERNARD HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO **DRINK**? I THINK WE'D BETTER GET HIM **HOME**!

SURE THEM, CORA? **CORR**, **BEHIND**!



YEA, I'D BEEN **DRINKING**? AND I HAD A **RIGHT** TO IT? ANY MAN IN MY POSITION WOULD HAVE **OTTEN** HIMSELF **DRAG** DRUNK? AFTER ALL, BEING **BURNED** FINANCIALLY IS NO EASY THING TO **TAKE**!

HEH? **WASH** MATTER? **WAS**? TIME TO GO **HOME**? TIME TO GO **HOME**? TIME TO GO **HOME**?



YOU HAD A PRETTY **ROUGH** TIME GETTING ME TO THE CAR, DIDN'T YOU, IRVING? AND ON THE WAY **HOME**...

BERNARD? **SPEAK** TO ME? IRVING? WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH HIM? HE'S **PASSED** OUT, CORA? DON'T **WORRY**? WE'LL PUT HIM TO **BED** AND HE'LL BE **OKAY** IN THE **MORNING**!



"YOU REMEMBER THAT NIGHT, GORAT? I'VE CARRIED ME INTO THE HOUSE AND LAID ME ON OUR BED! AND YOU TOOK OFF MY SHOES! REMEMBER I...?"

IS HE CRAZY, GORAT?

OH-HUH? HE'S ASLEEP?

WELL, IT... IT'S LATE! I'D BETTER BE GOING!

NOT JUST YET, IRV! I WANT TO TALK TO YOU! IT'S ABOUT BERNARD!

ANYTHING WRONG, GORAT?

EVERYTHING! HE WAS WORDED OUT TODAY! I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO!



GORAT! I... I NEVER KNEW!

AND DAD KNEW! NOT EVEN BERNIE! A WOMAN DOESN'T BRAG ABOUT THOSE THINGS! AND THEN YOU HAD TO COME BACK FROM ABOARD... HIS BEST FRIEND?

WHAT HAVE I GOT TO DO WITH THIS?

IT WASN'T SO BAD TILL THEN! I EVEN FELT SORRY FOR HIM WHEN JIMMY DIED! BUT THEN YOU CAME HOME... AND I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU!

"YOU'RE SURPRISED. AREN'T YOU, DONAT? YOU DIDN'T THINK I HEARD WHAT WAS SAID THAT NIGHT? YOU THOUGHT I WAS OUT SOLD ON THE BED."

"FOOL... YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH ME?"

"I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF, (BUT I TRIED TO HIDE IT)! I KNEW YOU WERE HIS BEST FRIEND!"



"WHY, YOU WERE SO ENTHRALLED IN EACH OTHER, YOU DIDN'T EVEN HEAR ME OPEN THE BEDROOM DOOR, DIDN'T? EVEN KNOW I WAS WATCHING!"

"YOU FOOL! YOU BILLY FOOL! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME? WE'VE WASTED ALL THIS TIME! WH. I'VE LOVED YOU SINCE THE FIRST DAY I MET YOU!"

"OH, WHY? WHY KISS ME?"



"AND YOU REALIZED I'D NEVER GIVE YOU A DIVORCE, DIDN'T YOU, DONAT? YOU AND ME STARTED CARRYING ON A LOVE AFFAIR BEHIND MY BACK? BUT YOU DID SUCH STUPID THINGS? YOU DIDN'T USE YOUR HEAD?"

"HE'S WORKING LATE, TONIGHT, DARLING! COME SEE ME!"

"I'LL BE RIGHT OVER, DONAT!"



"YOU BOTH MADE SO MANY MISTAKES! I CAME HOME EARLY THAT NIGHT! MY CAR WAS PARKED OUTSIDE! I LOOKED IN THE WINDOW! YOU'D EVEN NEGLECTED TO PULL DOWN THE BLINDS..."



"STUPID! STUPID! EVERY ONE OF YOU WERE STUPID! YOU DIDN'T THINK I KNEW?"



"YOU DIDN'T USE YOUR HEADS! NONE OF YOU DID!"



"PEOPLE WHO DON'T USE THEIR HEADS... DON'T NEED THEM..."



BERNARD POUNDED THE TABLE IN ANGER! HIS SURPRISE STAFFED! GORA PITCHED HOWARD! FANNY SLUMPED TO THE SIDE! JIMMY SLID OFF HIS CHAIR AND DROPPED TO THE FLOOR! AUNT GLORIANA SAT STIFFLY! JACQUEE SPRAWLED ACROSS HER LAF! BERNARD GRINNED AT THE DECAPITATED CORPSES! HE RAISED A GLASS OF WINE... IN TOAST...

TO PEOPLE, MEN, MEN...
WHO DON'T... MEN MEN...
USE THEM... EN, EN...
EN, EN...



THE
END...

the Guilty!

THE SHERIFF MOVED THROUGH THE CROWD, CLEAVING A PATH UP THE JAIL-HOUSE STEPS. WHEN HE REACHED THE TOP, HE TURNED TO THE BEARD-CAR CROOK AT THE GUSS...

ALL NIGHT, JED!
BRING THE
M---A ON
UP! NOW,
KEEP BACK,
POLICE!

OH, BAKHUFF!
O'NO,
COL. LAMB
GET
MOVING!

THE DEPUTY LED COLLINS UP THE LONG FLIGHT OF STEPS! THE CROWD MOVED IN ON THE FRIGHTENED, DARK-SKINNED PRISONER... SHOUTING PROPHETIES, CURSING, THREATENING...



WHAT'S HE DO, ANYWAY?

KILLED A WHITE WOMAN?

DID HE ATTACK HER?

PROBABLY!

WAIT A MINUTE! THEY DON'T KNOW FOR SURE! AND WHO SAYS COLLINS DID IT?

HEAVY BARRIER SEEN 'EM NEAR THE SCENE OF THE CRIME ABOUT THE TIME IT HAPPENED.

THAT DON'T MAKE 'EM GUILTY!

IT DOES IN MY BOOK! AN' SHERIFF JARSON'S PRETTY SET ON IT, TOO!



SOMEONE LET GO AT COLLINS AS HE PASSED AND THE BATTLE RAN DOWN HIS CHEEK! IT LOOKED LIKE HE WAS CRYING! THE SHERIFF HONORED THE INDIGNITY.

LET'S GO WHILE PRETTY YEAH! LET'S GO! HE'S THE GUP WHILE MAKE IT UP-TOWN YER DAMN! PAPERS, COLLINS! STILL ALIVE?



FINALLY THEY GOT THE PRISONER INSIDE THE JAILHOUSE...

TAKE THE PRISONER TO HIS CELL, JOE!

ORAY, SHERIFF! THAT CROWD OUT THERE'S MIGHTY RILED UP, SHERIFF! DON'T YOU.



DON'T YOU THINK WE BETTER LOOK AND BOLT THE DOORS? THEY WAT TRY SOMETHIN'!

IT'D SAVE THE STATE A LOT OF MONEY. 'HELD ON, WELL! MIGHTY YOU'RE RIGHT!



THE JAILHOUSE DOORS WERE BOLTED SHUT, AND OUTSIDE, THE CROWD CONTINUED TO MULL ABOUT. SOME, ANOTHER SIREN WAILED AND A BLACK LINCOLN PULLED UP...

IT'S THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY!

HEY, PREED! WHEN'S THE TRIAL?

TAKE IT EASY POLICE! THE TRIAL'LL COME OFF JUST AS SOON AS WE GET OUR CASE TOGETHER!



YOU AIN'T GONNA STALL AROUND ARE YA, PREED?

WE HAD BUSH THUNDER UP A ST, Y'KNOW!

NO YOU DON'T, NOYER! COLLINS IS GONNA GET A FANT TRIAL! I DON'T WANT ANY FUNKY BUSINESS!



FREDERICK MOORE REACHED THE TOP OF THE JAIL-HOUSE STEPS AND TURNED TO FACE THE GATHERED TOWNFOLK.



NOW, WHY DON'T YOU ALL GO ON HOME? YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING HANGING AROUND HERE! THE LAW'LE HANDLE THINGS! NO OH! ALL OF YOU! GO ON HOME!

CHOW, AL! HE'S RIGHT!

LET'S YEAN! SO!

THEY HESITATED TO MOVE OFF A FEW AT FIRST, THEN MORE AND MORE! SOON, THE JAIL-HOUSE STEPS WERE ALMOST OBSCURED.



OPEN UP, DAWSON! IT'S ME, FRED MOORE! THE O.A.!

OH MOORE! DEAR! JUST A MINUTE!

SHERIFF DAWSON UNLOCKED THE DOORS AND PEERED OUT...



HEY! WHERE'S EVERYBODY GO? BOB

I SENT 'EM ON HOME! THERE'D ONLY BE A LOT OF TROUBLE IF THEY HUNG AROUND!



SHUCKS! I THOUGHT THEY'D TRY AN' LINGER THE N---R!

DISAPPOINTED, SHERIFFS WILL... THERE'LL BE NO LINGERING WHILE I'M O.A.!



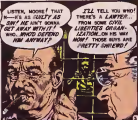
S. SURE, FRED! I ANNEE! ME'LL GET A'S FAIR AND SQUARE!

I'M NOT SO CERTAIN OF THAT, DAWSON!



WHY? WHADDA MEAN? WHAT'S MYBOP? WE KNOW WE DID IT!

YEAH, HE PROBABLY DID! BUT A SMART CRIMINAL LAWYER COULD TEAR OUR CASE AGAINST COLLINS TO SHREDS! WHAT HAVE WE GOT, THE TESTIMONY OF ONE MAN WHO MERELY PLACES COLLINS IN THE VICINITY AT THE TIME? EVEN IF WE COULD PROVE MOTIVE...



LISTEN, MOORE! THAT N---R'S AS GUILTY AS SIN! HE HUNY BORN! GET AWAY WITH IT! WHO, WHO'D DEFEND HIM ANYWAY?

I'LL TELL YOU WHO! THERE'S A LAWYER... FROM SOME CIVIL LIBERTIES ORGANIZATION... ON HIS WAY NOW! THOSE GUYS ARE PRETTY SUREW!

WHY IN BLAZES DON'T
THOSE GUYS
RING THEIR OWN
DANG BUSINESS?
THIS IS OUR PART'S
NOT THEIRS!

IT'S NO
PART'S BUSINESS
THERE'S A MAN'S
LIFE AT STAKE!
AND EVEN IF
WE FEEL HE
DID IT, HE'S
INNOCENT
UNTIL PROVED
GUILTY!

A MAN'S LIFE!
MAN! HE'S
ONLY A
BUTT
M---H!
AND HE'S
GUILTY...
UNLESS THAT
CAN PROVE HE
AIN'T!

HAVE IT YOUR
OWN WAY...
ONLY I WASH
YOU! THIS
CASE ISN'T
AS OUT AND
GONE AS
YOU THINK!

THEN WE OUGHT TO LET
THE GROUPS GET 'EM
BEFORE HE GOES
TO TRIAL!

GARBON!
IF YOU LET
THAT GROUP
GET COLLING,
I'LL
PROSECUTE YOU
FOR FAILURE TO
DO YOUR DUTY!



I CAN'T DO ANYTHING IF
A LYON GROUP
STAYS THIS JAIL-
HOUSE, MOORE! WHAT
DO YOU WANT ME TO DO,
NOW I'M DOWN WITH
A MACHINE-GUNS?

THEN GET DOLLING OUT
OF HERE! TALK HIM TO
THE COUNTY DEPT! HE
CAN STAY THERE TILL
TRIAL-DAYS!

GRAY! I'LL SNEAK 'EM
THERE TOMORROW!
THE BOYS OVER THERE
WORRY ABOUT HIM!

THEY'VE GOT A PRETTY
STRONG JAIL THERE, DAWSON.
THEY WON'T HAVE TO DO
MUCH WORRYIN'! IT'S US!
WE GOT THE MORIES! WE
GOT A CASE TO PRESENT!
AND IT DOESN'T LOOK TOO
FAT!



THAT NIGHT, A SQUAD-CAR PULLED UP TO THE REAR OF
THE JAIL-HOUSE, AND THE PRISONER WAS RUSTLED
OUT TO IT.

...THEN THE CAR MOVED OFF OUT OF TOWN...

WHERE WE TAKIN'
'EM, SHERRIFF?

COUNTY BE AT?
B.A.S. OFFERS!
SET ON 'EM,
B---H!

THERE'S A LYON
GROUP FORMIN'
DOWNTOWN, SHERRIFF!

YOU'RE MIGHTY LUCKY,
DOLLING! WE JUST GOT
YOU OUT IN TIME!

THEY'VE
STRUNG YOU
UP SURE!
EM, SHERRIFF!

SHUT UP
AND
DRIVE!



THE NEXT DAY, THE LAWYER FROM OUT-OF-TOWN, ARRIVED UPON THE SCENE.

MY NAME IS ANDERSON LOWELL ANDERSON! I'M HERE TO REPRESENT JIMMY DOLLARS!

HE AIN'T HERE! HE TOOK HIM TO THE COUNTY SEAT!



THAT WAS A VERY WISE THING TO DO, SHERIFF! WAS IT YOUR IDEA?

NO! THE D.A.'S FOR MY PART, THEY COULDA STROUNG IM UP LAST NIGHT! HE'S GUILTY, SURE!



THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN! HE'D LIKE TO EXAMINE THE TESTIMONY OF THIS MAN, MARK BARKER!

YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE THE D.A. 'BOUT THAT! HE'S GOT ALL THE DOPE IN HIS FILES!



SOON, RUMORS BEGAN TO FLY AROUND THE TOWN.

HEY, SHERIFF! THEY SAY THIS BUT ANDERSON'S GONNA GET COLLINS OFF!

THEY SAY HE'S A SHARP! SHERIFF'S COLLINS'S GUILTY, AIN'T HE?

YAWN! LET ME, SHERIFF! I DO! I DONE MY JOB! I PICKED IM UP! IT'S UP TO THE D.A. NOW!



THE DAYS CHANGED BY.

THEY SAY ANDERSON'S GONNA BEST OPEN MARK BARKER'S TESTIMONY, DAWSON!

CONCERN- STANTIAL EVIDENCE! HE GONNA STAND FOR THAT, SHERIFF?

YOU SHOULD'VE PLOWED IM WHILE YOU HAD THE CHANCE! I CAN'T DO NOTHING NOW!



TRIAL-DAY DREW NEAR.

MR. ANDERSON! DO YOU HAVE ANY STATEMENT TO MAKE TO THE PRESS?

GENTLEMEN! I HAVE SPOKEN TO MY CLIENT, MR. COLLINS, AND I HAVE EXAMINED THE TESTIMONY! I AM CONVINCED OF HIS INNOCENCE AND WILL PROVE IT AT THE TRIAL!



COLLINS IS GUILTY! HE PRACTICALLY ADMITTED IT! NO LEGAL SMART-ALICE FROM OUT-OF-TOWN IS GONNA GET AWAY OFF! NOT WHILE I'M SHERIFF!

MAY WE QUOTE YOU, SHERIFF DAWSON?



THE DAY OF THE TRIAL SHOWN DARK AND GLOOMY! IT HAD RAINED ALL THE PREVIOUS NIGHT! THE SHERIFF AND TWO OF HIS DEPUTIES SET OFF FOR THE COUNTY SEAT TO BRING BACK ARBURY COLLINS...



THEY STAYED BACK IN SILENCE! COLLINS SAT, HANDCUFFED, BETWEEN SHERIFF DAWSON AND ONE DEPUTY! THE OTHER DEPUTY DROVE! FINALLY...



THE SQUAD-CAR ROLLED TO A STOP! THE RAIN CONTINUED TO POUR DOWN...



THE DEPUTY NAMED JED STEPPED OUT INTO THE POURING RAIN AND STARTED TO CIRCLE THE CAR, LOOKING AT THE TIRE...



DANSON SHOWED COLLINS OUT OF THE CAR! THE DARK-SKINNED BOY SPRAWLED IN THE MUD! THE SHERIFF DREW HIS GUN AND COOKED THE HAMMER.



COLLINS TURNED AND SAW THE SHERIFF SIGHTED CAREFULLY...

THE BULLET CAUGHT THE DARK-SKINNED BOY IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD! HE PITCHED FORWARD...



THEY PICKED UP COLLINS AND CLAMPED HIM IN THE BACK SEAT! THEN THEY DROVE ON TO TOWN! THERE WAS A CROWD AROUND THE COURT-HOUSE WHEN THEY ARRIVED! MOORE, THE D.A., CAME TO THE CURB AS THEY DROVE UP...



COLLINS GOT TO HIS FEET! HE STARRED AT THE GUN FOR A MOMENT, SHAKING HIS HEAD! DANSON SQUEEZED THE TRIGGER! THE BULLET HOOKED UP THE PUDDLE TO THE RIGHT OF THE COLORED BOY'S FEET.



HE WAS LYING FACE DOWN IN A MUD-PUDDLE WHEN THEY CAME UP...



'GODD LORD! HANK DANKER JUST CONFESSED! HENDERSON BROKE HIM DOWN! HE DID IT! WE KILLED THE WOMAN! COLLINS WAS INNOCENT! INNOCENT AS A BABY! WELL... YOU BAD HE ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE! WONDER WHAT CHASED HIM TO TRY?

WHETHER ALBERT COLLINS WAS INNOCENT OR NOT... IS NOT IMPORTANT! BUT FOR ANY AMERICAN TO HAVE SO LITTLE REGARD FOR THE LIFE AND RIGHTS OF ANY OTHER AMERICAN IS A DEBARTHMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTION UPON WHICH OUR COUNTRY IS FOUNDED!



—EDGEMAN



JUMP-OFF!

Battered though he was, Ben Troy was alert enough to glance at the elevator button which the cop pressed. Despite the haze of pain forcing him back past the edge of unconsciousness, the captive Public Enemy caught sight of the number "2" under the man's thumb. He groaned in agony and cussed frantically on the wheeled emergency stretcher, but what he had seen kept drumming through his fevered brain. The Police who had captured him when his car cracked-up... they were taking him to a hospital room on the *second floor*. His luck was holding out! The *second floor* gave him at least a whisper of a chance to escape the hot seat awaiting his recovery from the accident! Two... two... *TWO*... with a break like this, he had an even-chance of a getaway!

It seemed like aeons later that Ben Troy recovered consciousness. Only his right eye was free of bandages, and when he turned in the bed a stabbing pain shuddered through his body. He was able to move, agonizing though it was... those fool cops had neglected to strap him to his bed! *They must've thought that car crash put old Ben on the skids*, he thought to himself. *After Sing Sing and Alcatraz, jumping-off from this cheer-box of a hospital oughtn't be a snap!*

Slowly, gritting his teeth to keep a gasp of pain from escaping, he slid from the hospital bed and wobbled toward the single window on the far side of the darkened room. He crouched over and listened to the voices whispering outside the door. Two of them, he gloated... *two cops stationed outside! That damned District Attorney's story is thick*

THAT'S enough to keep Ben Troy from escaping!

With painstaking care he opened the room's only window. It was pitch-black outside... he couldn't see a foot beyond the sill. But what Ben *could* see made him chuckle inwardly. The window was *unbarred*! All he had to do was get out on that sill and drop to the ground! With teeth grinding into his lower lip to keep from crying out in pain, he clambered ponderously into the space left by the open window. Nothing was visible below him in the darkness outside... must be a narrow inner court, he decided! Perfect spot for his jump-off! Enclosed as it was, his decent would never be heard! He could probably find a door and force his way out before they ever suspected that he was gone!

He drew a deep breath and relaxed his grip on the window sill, feeling the air rush up to meet him as he dropped. *Second floor*, he gloated... *all I'll get is a little running up!* *Lucky those jerks didn't know I realized how close to the ground I was!*

* * * * *

The bald police officer looked at his wrist-watch.

"Wow!" he exclaimed. "Time sure passed while we gassed out here! We better get this Troy character back to the receiving room. Why we gotta keep moving him around this hospital is something I'll never understand!"

The bald-headed officer round the back of the door he had been guarding and, followed by the other policeman, stepped into Room 819...

YOU'LL BE JARRED BY THE STARTLING WIND-UP TO THIS
SCIENCE-FICTION YARN!

The **BIG STAND-UP!**



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSE STORY

MY NAME IS BART THOMPSON! I'M A TELEVISION ENGINEER! YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE THE STORY I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU... BUT IT'S TRUE, EVERY WORD OF IT I KNOW, BECAUSE IT HAPPENED TO ME! IT ALL BEGAN THE NIGHT I DECIDED TO WORK LATE AT THE T.V. STUDIO WHERE I WAS EMPLOYED...

THE NIGHT'S TRANSMISSION TIME WAS OVER AND EVERYONE HAD GONE HOME! JACK WAS THE LAST TO LEAVE! I WENT OUT ONTO THE SOUND STAGE AND ROLLED CAMERA ONE OVER TO THE CONTROL ROOM WINDOW! I POINTED IT AT MY SEAT INSIDE AND FOCUSED CAREFULLY...



COMING, BART?

YOU GO AHEAD, JACK! I'M GOING TO HAND AROUND! I WASN'T PLEASED WITH CAMERA ONE'S PICTURE, TONIGHT! THERE I'LL TRY AND ALIGN IT BETTER!



YOU MADE THE MARCH'S WIFE LOOK LIKE SHE WEIGHED THREE HUNDRED POUNDS TONIGHT, BART! SHE'S FAT, BUT NOT THAT FAT! YOU NEED SOME ADJUSTING...

THEN I WENT INTO THE CONTROL ROOM'S SET DOWN AT THE MONITOR-PANEL AND FLIPPED ON CAMERA ONE'S MONITOR-SCREEN? THEN I CUT IN THE JUDGE AND DROPPED THE TRANSMITTER HOOK-UP SO THE IMAGE WOULDN'T GO OUT OVER THE AIR? PRETTY SOON MY OWN SAC PUNS APPEARED ON THE SCREEN.

BOY, YOU GOT NEED ADJUSTING, BART!
- I LOOK LIKE I JUST GOT SLAPPED
ON THE HEAD WITH A 2X4! BOY! -



THE FACE ON CAMERA ONE'S MONITOR-TUBE WAS NOT "OFF-FACE." IT WAS THE FACE OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

HE'S HAVING THE NEW
ADULTS' SOMEBODY TRYIN'
TO BE ADULTS



I FLICKED ON THE CONTROL ROOM MIRE AND STUDIO P.A. SYSTEM BY VOICE RECORD THROUGH THE DELETED SPYGLASS.

LOVE, WHEREVER YOU ARE? I'M TRYIN' TO GET SOME MOVIE CREDITS, AND THE COMEDY AND CUT IN CAMERA ONE AGAIN?



I WENT OUT TO THE CAMERA AND INCREASED THE VIDEO CAL. DRIVE." THEN I CHECKED THE LINEARITY AND RETURNED TO MY SEAT.

THREE! THAT'S WHAT TO LOOK FOR!
GET A GOOD SIGHTING! GET IT!



I WAS LOSING MY TEMPER FAST!
FIRST THAT HORRIBLE PAGE...AND
NOW SOME JIVE DOUBLE-TALK...

CLIMB OFF IT!
I DIDN'T LEAVE
LATE FOR FUN!
AREN'T YOU
GOING TO...?



I COULDN'T FIGURE IT OUT" CAMERA ONE WAS "ON". I COULD TELL BY THE GLOWING RED LIGHT ON THE TOP" AND IT WAS POINTED DIRECTLY AT ME" YET THE MONITOR IN THE CONTROL ROOM DISPLAYED THE PICTURE OF THAT LUSCIOUS BABE" I POKED MONITOR 2. "MOMENT 2 MUST BE DORMANT."

[illegible]

NO! I WAS WIDE AWAKE! SOMETHING FREAKISH WAS TAKING PLACE! UNLESS SOMEONE'D DELIBERATELY REWIRED THE MONITOR BOARD, THIS THING WAS IMPOSSIBLE! BUT I NEARLY TORN THE PLACE APART WHEN SHE STARTED TALKING AGAIN.

WHO ARE YOU? J. AN. LARA
VIEW GRAPH. ENGINEER. TECH. THIRD
SHIFT. INTERPLANETARY COMMUNICA-
TION COMMANDER. HEADQUARTERS
STATION. JUNE ON PLANET 4.
NON-STOP
IN. OUT -
IT OUT. WILL
YOUR THAT?
THROUGH POOL IN

FROM THE
RE. CUT -
AT CUT WILL
KNOW THAT'S
THROUGH FOR IN
A SECOND."



BUT SHE JUST LEFT ON TALKING! AND SHE WAS DEAD SERIOUS...

OPERATION OF INTER-PLANETARY COMMUNICATIONS IS NOT FOOLING AROUND! YOU ARE JAMMING MY WAVELENGTH! IDENTIFY YOURSELF!

WHA? WHY? I LISTEN, BUT I DON'T!

THIS IS T.V. ENGINEER BART THOMPSON STATION WIDE-TV... PLANET EARTH... SALARY \$75.50 PER... AND I'LL KNOW YOUR BOFFRIEND'S HEAD OFF WHEN I GET AROUND OF...

PLANET... WHAT?

EARTH! LIKE HE'S GONNA BE SHIPPED SIX FEET UNDER! LOOK HERE, JACK! THAT'S EARTH!

EARTH? IN WHAT SOLAR SYSTEM IS YOUR PLANET LOCATED?

IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM WITH THE NINE PLANETS... INCLUDING THE ONE WITH THE JUNG... WHICH IS JUST WHAT I'M GONNA DO TO YOUR NECK...

THE ONE WITH THE JUNG? BUT THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

IMPOSSIBLE? YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM IS EIGHTY LIGHT-YEARS AWAY! THE ONE WITH THE JUNG... IT IS THE SIXTH PLANET FROM THE START.

THAT'S RIGHT! AND I'M ON THE THIRD EARTH! SAY! IS THIS A JUNG OR NOT? IT?

THIS IS NO JOKE, BART THOMPSON... STATION WIDE-TV SALARY \$75.50 PER HOUR ARE EIGHTY LIGHT-YEARS AWAY!

BUT, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! DO YOU SEE ME?

VERY CLEARLY!

BUT I'M NOT EVEN TRANSMITTING! I'M ON A CLOSING ELECTRONIC CIRCUIT?

OBVIOUSLY, IT IS AN INTERSTELLAR ELECTRONIC WARR!

SAY! HOW COME I CAN UNDERSTAND YOU? IF YOU'RE FROM SOME OTHER WORLD, HOW COME YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?

I DON'T SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE! I SPEAK MY OWN! YOU HEARD IT BEFORE? I HAVE AN AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR HOOKED UP! IT'S A TYPE OF MECHANICAL-ELECTRIC BRAIN! IT TRANSLATES OUR RESPECTIVE LANGUAGES FOR US!

LARA WAS LOVELY! WE CHATTERED FOR HALF THE NIGHT! SHE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT HER PLANET, AND I TOLD HER ALL ABOUT EARTH.

YOU... YOU'RE VERY BEAUTIFUL, LARA! AND YOU ARE QUITE HANDSOME, BART!



TOWARDS MORNING I CONFESSED TO LARA...

I... I LOVE YOU, LARA! I KNOW IT'S CRAZY... AND USELESS... BUT I DO!



THEN SHE WAS GONE! I CHECKED EVERYTHING CAREFULLY...NOTING EACH ADJUSTMENT OF THE EQUIPMENT IN THE CONTROL ROOM! THEN I WENT HOME! THE NEXT NIGHT...

STIRIN' LATE, AGAIN, BART!



YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT SPACE TRAVEL! YOUR PEOPLE HAVE IT?



WOULD YOU COME TO EARTH, HONEY? I WOULD WAIT FOR YOU!



AS SOON AS EVERYONE WAS GONE, I SET UP THE EQUIPMENT EXACTLY AS IT HAD BEEN THE PREVIOUS NIGHT! LARA CAME IN SHARP!

DARLING! I WAS SO WORRIED THAT THAT IT WOULDN'T WORK! AGAIN! I THOUGHT ABOUT YOU ALL DAY!



BUT YOU COULDN'T COME HERE, COULD YOU?



BUT, LARA! SUPPOSE WE CANNOT MAKE CONTACT AGAIN?



THAT NIGHT I LEARNED THAT LARA SOCIETY HAD A MARRIAGE-FAMILY SET-UP ALSO...

IF... IF YOU CAME TO EARTH, LARA, I'D MARRY YOU!



WE WANT ON LIKE FOR A YEAR! EVERY NIGHT I'D TALK TO LARA ACROSS THE VOID OF SPACE! WE FELL DEEPLY AND PASSIONATELY IN LOVE! I LONGED FOR HER! THEN, ONE NIGHT...

I HAVE WONDERFUL NEWS, DARLING! ONE OF OUR SCIENTISTS HAS JUST PERFECTED A NEW TYPE SPACECRAFT! IT WOULD ONLY TAKE HALF A HOUR TO GET TO YOUR PLANET NOW!

COULD YOU?



I COULD STEAL THE EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET-SHIP! IF I GOT AWAY, THEY'D NEVER BE ABLE TO STOP ME... AND I'D COME TO YOU! BUT, IF I WERE CAUGHT, IT WOULD MEAN MY LIFE!



MY LIFE IS EMPTY WITHOUT YOU, LARA!

THEN I WILL DO IT! BUT WE MUST PLAN EVERYTHING CAREFULLY! MEET ME - FULLY!



WE STARTED BY TRY TRANSMITTING MAPS OF EARTH TO LARA! IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT SHE KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO LAND...

YOU'VE GOT THE MEMORANDUMS AND CONTINENT! NOW HERE'S A MORE DETAILED MAP OF THE AREA! SEE! YOU'LL LAND HERE! ON THESE SALT-PLATE!



I'D CHOSEN THE MOST BARREN AREA I COULD THINK OF FOR LARA TO COME DOWN IN! I WANTED TO KEEP THIS WHOLE THING QUIET! AFTER TWO WEEKS OF PLANNING AND PREPARATION...

JUST COME DOWN AS NEAR TO THE BLINDING LIGHT AS POSSIBLE! THAT'LL BE ME!

GOOD-BYE, HARRY! SEE YOU IN SIX MONTHS WHEN YOU CALL IT?



YES, HARRY! SIX MONTHS! AND PLEASE BE CAREFUL! I LOVE YOU SO!

I'LL BE CAREFUL! I'VE ALREADY BURNED THE BEARS! IT WILL BE EASY! TELL ME WHEN...



THE NEXT NIGHT, I TRIED TO MAKE CONTACT WITH LARA... BUT SHE DIDN'T COME IN! I KNEW SHE WAS ON HER WAY! THE NEXT SIX MONTHS WERE SPEECH AGONY... THE AGONY OF WAITING! FINALLY, THE TIME CAME NEAR...

REMEMBER THAT JEEP WITH THE SEARCHLIGHT MOUNTED ON IT THAT WE USED WHEN THAT MOVIE STAR CAME TO TOWN, JACK?

YES! WE GOT IT FROM THE ARMY! THEY SAID WE COULD HAVE IT ANYTIME!



I BORROWED IT! I HAVE THE ARMY A TALL STORY ABOUT ANOTHER MOVIE STAR AND DROVE OUT TO THE SALT-PLATE! AS THE HOUR DREW NEAR, I STARTED FLASHING THE LIGHT INTO THE STAR-STUCCO SKY...

HERE, LARA! MEET ME HERE, HONEY!



SUDDENLY THE SKY ABOVE ME WAS FILLED WITH A ROARING, AND THE SEARCHLIGHT GAUGED A GLEAMING SILVER SHAP...



THE SHIP CAME TO REST ABOUT A MILE AWAY! I SPED ACROSS THE FLATS TOWARD IT, THE SEARCHLIGHT TRAILING ON IT...



LARA'S ROCKET-SHIP DROPPED TAIL-FIRST TOWARD THE FLATS TO THE NORTH OF ME...



AS I NEARED LARA'S SHIP, A STRANGE THING BEGAN TO HAPPEN...



IT WAS LARA'S SHIP! IT SEEMED TO BE SPLITTING IN TWO... FROM STEM TO STERN...



... AND AS THE TWO HALVES OF THE GIANT SHIP PARTED WIDE, I SCREAMED...



LARA LOOKED EXACTLY AS SHE'D APPEARED ON THE TV. MONITOR SCREEN! THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS SHE STOOD ABOUT TWO HUNDRED FEET TALL...



HERE IS A TALE OF TENSION WITH SHEER,
STARK HORROR IN ITS GRIPPING CLIMAX!

STUMPED!

**A HORROR
SUSPENSE STORY**



FAR UP IN THE NORTHERN-MOST REACHES OF THE CANADIAN WOODS ARE MEN WHO LIVE BY TRAPPING THE VALUABLE, FUR-BEARING ANIMALS WHICH ROAM THAT AREA? SUCH A MAN IS HENRI PETITE...



WON SOON MY BEAR-TRAP? SHE IS SUPPOSED TO LIE FROM THAT TREE FELL UPON IT!

HENRI PETITE HAS MANY TRAPS! DURING THE TRAPPING SEASON HE SETS THEM OUT IN A ROUTE CALLED A "TRAP-LINE" IT TAKES MANY DAYS TO TRAVEL THIS TRAP-LINE AND COLLECT THE ANIMALS THAT HAVE BECOME CAGED...



WHAT WILL I DO? IT TAKES TWO MEN TO OPEN THE JAWS OF THE BEAR-TRAP ONE BY HIMSELF DOES NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH!

TRAPPERS LIKE HENRI LIVE IN SMALL, COMFORTABLE CABINS DEEP IN THE WOODS. ALL WINTER LONG THEY SET OUT FROM THEIR CABINS TO TRAVEL THEIR TRAP LINES! THEY RETURN MANY DAYS... PERHAPS WEEKS... LATER, AND REST UP AFTER THEY ARE RESTED, THEY SET OUT AGAIN.



BEARS SOMETIMES WEIGH AS MUCH AS A THOUSAND POUNDS! YOU CAN UNDERSTAND HOW STRONG A TRAP MUST BE TO CATCH A BEAR AND HOLD IT.



MANGEL CANAL IS ALSO A TRAPPER! HIS CABIN IS LOCATED NOT FAR FROM HENRI'S! DURING THE LONG WINTER, WHEN THEY ARE NOT OUT ON THEIR TRAP LINES, THE TWO TRAPPERS SPEND MANY HOURS TOGETHER... PLAYING CHECKERS...



THE BEAR-TRAP IS A HUGE STEEL-JAWED AFFAIR! IN THE CENTER IS A SMALL PLAT DISC WHICH TRIGGERS THE SET TRAP! USUALLY THE ANIMAL STEPS UPON THIS TRIGGER, AND THE TRAP SNAPS SHUT! BUT A BEAR-TRAP, BY NECESSITY, MUST BE A *HOLD* ONE...



I MAKE OUT WELL THIS TRAP! BUT STILL NO BEAR! THE TRAP WE SET TOGETHER HAS NOT BEEN TOUCHED! I AM NOT SO FORTUNATE, MANGEL! MY BEAR-TRAP, SHE IS *SPRINGING*!





THERE IS ENOUGH
TIME FOR NEXT WHEN
JOURNEY COMES!
HOW MANY DAYS
JOURNEY IS IT?
I'VE FORGOTTEN!

IT IS
NOT ONE
DAY!



GOOD! WE
WILL LEAVE
IN THE
MORNING!

YOU ARE MY
BEST FRIEND,
MARCEL! I AM
LIGHT MAN!



GOOD NIGHT,
HENRI!

GOOD NIGHT,
MARCEL!

A FEW MILES FROM HENRI PETITE'S CABIN IS THE CABIN
OF JACQUES GOMMET, ANOTHER TRAPPER. JACQUES HAS
ALWAYS HATED HENRI. HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN JEALOUS
OF HENRI'S TRAP-TERRITORY. HENRI'S TRAP-LINES
HAVE ALWAYS PRODUCED MANY MORE FELTS THAN
JACQUES.



BAH! SEVEN FELTS! THAT IS ALL
I FIND THIS TRIP! MARCEL ENOUGH
TO PAY FOR MY FOOD!

IN THE NORTH-WOODS COUNTRY, A TRAPPER'S TERRI-
TORY IS REGARDED AS SACRED. NO TRAPPER DARES
LAY HIS TRAPS IN ANOTHER'S TERRITORY. IT IS AN
UNWRITTEN LAW.



BUT IF HENRI PETITE WERE DEAD,
I COULD SET MY TRAPS IN HIS TERRI-
TORY! AND THEN, HOW I COULD
PAY FOR THAT DAY!

THE NEXT MORNING, HENRI AND MARCEL START OUT FOR
HENRI'S BEAR-TRAP TO RE-SET IT. JACQUES WATCHES
THEM GO.



I WONDER WHAT THOSE
TWO ARE GOING TO? I WILL
FOLLOW THEM AND SEE!

TOWARDS NOON, THE TWO MEN REACH THE SPRING
BEAR-TRAP. JACQUES, KEEPING WELL HIDDEN, HAS
FOLLOWED THEM TO THE SPOT.



HERE IT IS, MARCEL! SEE
HOW THE TRIP-LINE HAS
FALLEN UPON THE RELEASE
DISC.

YES! WELL!
COME! LET US
RE-SET IT!

EACH MAN GRABS ONE OF THE JAWS OF THE HUGE BEAR TRAP AND THEY BEGIN TO PULL...

WOWWWW! SURE
AREN'T THIS IS A... UMP...
POWERFUL ONE?

JUST A LITTLE...
WASP... MORE...
WASPEL?



THERE? IT
IS SET?

WHEW! THINK OF WHAT WOULD
HAPPEN IF A MAN WERE CAUGHT
IN THIS TRAP? HE WOULD
NEVER BE ABLE TO GET OUT
BY HIMSELF!



YOU ARE RIGHT,
HENRI? JUST BE
CAREFUL YOU
YOURSELF DO
NOT STEP
INTO IT?

DO NOT WORRY,
MARCEL? I KNOW
EXACTLY
WHERE IT IS!
COME! LET US
GO!



AS THE TWO FRIENDS BEGIN
THEIR RETURN JOURNEY, JACQUES
SOBBET EMERGES FROM HIS
HIDE-PLACE...

DO! YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHERE
THE TRAP IS, EH, HENRI? WELL!
I SURELY CAN FOR THAT!



JACQUES RETURNS TO HIS CABIN
MEANWHILE FORMULATING HIS
TREACHEROUS SCHEME...

IF I WERE TO MOVE THE
TRAP... JUST A LITTLE WAY UP
THE TRAIL... AND HENRI WERE
TO STEP IN IT... HE WOULD
FALL TO DEATH BEFORE
ANYONE MISSED HIM!



FROM HIS CABIN, JACQUES TAKES A HACK-SAW, TWO
STRONG LOOKS, AND TWO LENGTHS OF HEAVY CHAIN!
HE RETURNS WITH THEM TO HENRI'S BEAR-TRAP...

I MUST BE VERY CAREFUL NOT
TO SPRING THE TRAP WHILE I
MOVE IT!



SLOWLY, CAUTIOUSLY, JACQUES CUTS THE CHAIN THAT
ANCHORS THE BEAR-TRAP WITH THE HACK-SAW...

AH! IT IS CUT THROUGH!
NOW TO MOVE IT UP-TRAIL!



JAGUES IS GASPING FOR BREATH WHEN HE FINALLY FINISHES DRAGGING THE SET-TRAP UP-TRAIL TO A SPOT BETWEEN TWO TALL TREES...



WHEN? I AM
SHAKING LIKE A LEAF!
BUT... I HAVE DONE
IT!

CURLING ONE OF THE LEGS OF HIS CHAIR ABOUT ONE OF THE TWO TREES AND LOOPING IT THROUGH THE TRAP, JAGUES LOCKS IT CLOSED WITH ONE OF THE TWO LOCKS HE'S BROUGHT...



THERE? NOW THE OTHER ONE!

REPEATING THIS MANEUVER ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE TRAIL... JAGUES SECURES THE TRAP TIGHTLY BETWEEN THE TWO TREES.



NOW TO JUDGE THE
TRAP SO HENRI WILL
NOT SEE IT!

A FEW HANDFULS OF DEAD LEAVES ARE DRIED THIN AND THE TRAP IS CAMOUFLAGED! JAGUES GINS AT HIS WORK...



HEH, HEH! NOW IT IS READY FOR YOU,
HENRI! READY FOR YOU!

IT IS ALMOST A WEEK LATER THAT HENRI PETITE COMPLETES ANOTHER TRAP-LINE TOUR AND MOVES UP THE TRAIL, TOWARD HIS BEAR-TRAP.



I DO NOT HEAR ANY THUNDERING OR
BROWLING! AHH! NO LUCK! WELL! I
WILL CHECK TO SEE IF THE TRAP
IS STILL...

THE MIGHTY JAWS OF THE TRAP SPRING SHUT ON HENRI'S ANGLE.



FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, HENRI STRUGGLES TO FREE HIMSELF! THE MAN IS EXHAUSTING! THE HUGE STEEL TEETH GRIN IN DEEP! FINALLY, HE LAYS BACK EXHAUSTED.



IT... IT IS NO USE, SASP! IT IS... SASP... NO USE!
I CANNOT OPEN THE TRAP BY MYSELF! I...
SASP... I MUST WAIT FOR... SASP... SOMEONE TO
SASP... RESCUE ME!

HENRI LOOKS AROUND¹ HIS PACK AND HIS GUN LAY WHERE THEY HAVE FALLEN² HE REACHES OUT FOR THEM.

JACQUE³ DIED!
I FORGOT ABOUT
YOUR GUN...
YOUR PACK!

JACQUE³ OH,
JACQUES³ DIED
MERCY!



JACQUES MOVED FROM HIS HIDING PLACE AND GRABBED HENRI'S EQUIPMENT. BEHIND HIM, HE REACH...

JACQUE³ WHAT ARE
YOU DOING? HELP ME!
HELP ME!

OH, NO, HENRI! YOU
ARE GOING TO STAY HERE,
AND PREPARED TO
DEATH!



JACQUES³ WHAT
ARE YOU SAY-
ING? YOU
WOULD LEAVE
ME HERE?

OF COURSE,
HENRI! WHO
DO YOU THINK
MOVED YOUR
TRAP IN THE
FIRST PLACE?



YOU?
YOU
DID
THIS?
BUT
WHY?

BECAUSE I WANT YOUR
TRAP-LINES, HENRI!
THIS WILL LOOK LIKE
AN UNFORTUNATE
ACCIDENT! THEY'LL
THINK YOU WERE
RELOCATING YOUR
TRAP...AND IT
SPREAD!



I'M GLAD I DECIDED TO
FOLLOW YOU TO SEE IF MY
PLAN WORKED! I FORGOT
ABOUT YOUR PACK AND GUN!
NOW YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO
REACH THEM! WELL, NOW HENRI,
MERCY! PERHAPS A WILD CAT
OR WOLF WILL END YOUR
SUFFERING...FAST!



JACQUES DISAPPEARS INTO THE WOODS AND HENRI STARES AFTER HIM DUMFOUNDED.

I...I WILL STARVE WITHOUT MY
PACK! I CANNOT PROTECT MYSELF
WITHOUT MY GUN! I WILL
DIE HERE!



FOR MANY HOURS, HENRI STRUGGLES IN VAIN TRY-
ING TO FREE HIMSELF, TRYING TO REACH HIS KNAP-
SACK! BUT HE KNOWS THAT IT IS USELESS! HE
THINKS OF THE MANY ANIMALS THAT HE HAS
TRAPPED THIS NEXT A DAY PASSES! TWO! HUNGER
GNAW AT HENRI'S STOMACH.



A WEEK LATER, MARCEL DUNAL COMES TO SEE JACQUES SOUSBET.

IT IS ABOUT HENRI PETITE? HE HAS NOT RETURNED FROM HIS TRAIL-LINE YET? I AM WORRIED ABOUT HIM!

STAY HIM A FEW MORE DAYS? IF HE DOES NOT COME, WE WILL LOOK FOR HIM!



MEANWHILE, OUT IN THE WOODS, A HANGED, HALF-STAYED FIGURE DROPS ITSELF ALONG, LEAVING A TRAIL OF BLOOD BEHIND IT...



OH AND OH, PAINFULLY, HENRI PULLS HIMSELF! AS NIGHT FALLS, HE HEARS THE CRY OF JACQUES SOUSBET...



JACQUES IS IN HIS COAT DOING WHEN THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN! HENRI STANDS FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY, THE STUMP OF HIS RIGHT LEG DRINKING SHADY.



HENRI! YOU TELL YOU FREE YOURSELF! YOU TELL NOW, SHIT! YOUR LEG!

THE SHOTGUN IN HENRI'S HANDS EXPLODES AND JACQUES'S FACE MELTS INTO A RED MASH...



WHEN MARCEL DUNAL COMES TO SOUSBET'S CABIN THE NEXT MORNING, HE FINDS JACQUES DEAD! HENRI SAYS: OUT HIS STORY.



THE THE DIRTY SHIT! BUT, BUT NOW DO YOU FREE YOURSELF, HENRI? YOU HAD A LITTLE A KNIFE?

NO, BASH. MY KNIFE WAS IN... FACE...

HENRI'S ANSWER IS ALMOST UNTHINKABLE! IT COMES IN HIS DYING BREATH...



I OVER I OVER MY LEG OFF!

THE END

IMPACT



NO. 4
AUG.-SEPT.

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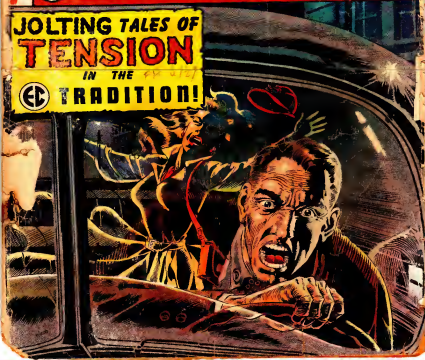
SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES

JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION

IN THE



TRADITION!



SHOCK TALK

Good Lord! SHOCK No. 4 already! Well, actually, we're a little premature with this column (SHOCK No. 3 is just about to hit the stands, so we haven't as yet received a single letter concerning on it! We are especially interested in the reactions to our "off the beaten-path" story, THE GUILTY . . . but we're afraid you'll have to wait until next issue for the thoughts of your co-readers! (As we mentioned, this column is being written earlier than it would be normally . . . we're in the midst of our annual "spring speed-up," necessitated by our engraving shop taking a three week vacation on leave in July!)

Meanwhile, your letters and comments have continued to pour in re SHOCK No. 2! Within the last few months, we've received several letters complaining that we publish too many complimentary letters! As Greg Arlen of Atlanta, Georgia puts it: "O.K., fellows! I agree that E.C. magazines are the best . . . but let's stop spending off on those letter pages about how good they are! Stop printing letters that complement you!"

Well, we agree . . . and as a consequence, we've tried very hard to do just that in the run of our line! (See Min. Arline Grunden Philan's letter in Weird Fantasy No. 13 or Vault of Horror No. 23!) However, SHOCK being our new baby, and we being like all proud fathers, we'd like to "spout off" just one more time! (See next issue for lighter letters!) So if'n ya don't like shock, skip the rest of this column (except for subscription info!) and shift your eyes right to SPLIT SECOND, Jack Kamen's lead-off Crime SuspensStory. Following that, you will read Wally Wood's Shock SuspensStory, CONFESSION. Next comes Joe Orlando's S-F SuspensStory, STRICTLY BUSINESS . . . and Jack Davis winds up with the Horror SuspensStory offering, UPPERCUT! (Scripts by Feldman . . . cover by Wood!)

Dear Editors,

Congrats! SHOCK SUSPENSSTORIES is the greatest thing since the alphabet!

Marie Rush—Greenland, Ohio

. . . Let me congratulate you guys for putting out the best I've read I've ever read!

Roger Robinson—Eva, Texas

. . . I have always felt, somehow, that E.C. mags are "personally mine" . . . that the public is awarded a share of them, somehow! My interest in them exceeds that of any other magazines of their type. SHOCK is a welcome addition!

Ruby MacDonald—Raleigh, N. C.

. . . SHOCK is the best mag I've ever read. I especially like the story, THE PATRIOTS. It well illustrates the shack of prejudice. Let's have more stories on racial and religious prejudice too!

John Gordon—Fenton, Mich

. . . E.C. mags are the best things to hit the newsstands in a long time. The Sealers have really got a charge out of them. Your latest brain-child, SHOCK, is terrific. It's great to know there's a comic publishing company left that appreciates its readers' intelligence. Why don't your readers give up? They've met their match!

R. C. Ford—2nd Amphibious Seabees, Little Creek, Va

They say that you can't tell a book by its cover! But the E.C. emblem on the cover of a coming book tells you that the book has GOT to be good! SHOCK SUSPENSSTORIES proves it!

John Lencicki—Burlington, Vt

And now, you slash-lovers (you bold!) can read up! When you've finished, jet down those suggestions, criticisms, queries, and compliments! (Don't worry! We'll print a few!) on a 2c post card! (Where? Inflation is here!) and send them along to us! Subscriptions . . . 75c for 6 issues . . . a full year's supply! The address for the whole man is:

The Editors
Shock SuspensStories
Room 706, Dept. 4
225 Lafayette St.
N. Y. C. 12, N. Y.

The following is a complete list of titles published by



In the order of their publication.

THE HAUNT OF FEAR

WEIRD SCIENCE

CRIME SUSPENSSTORIES

FRONTLINE COMBAT

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

WEIRD FANTASY

THE VAULT OF HORROR

SHOCK SUSPENSSTORIES

TWO-FISTED TALES

YOU'LL BE JARRED BY THE IMPACT OF THE
STARTLING CLIMAX TO THIS YARN!

SPLIT SECOND!

A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY

I FIRST MET STEVE DIXON IN THE SMALL
CANADIAN TOWN WHERE I WORKED. STEVE'D COME
DOWN FROM HIS CAMP FOR A BRIEF VACATION! I
WAS DIXON' IN A CABARET AT THE TIME, AND
GETTIN' PRETTY SICK OF FIGHTING OFF DRUNKEN
LUMBERJACKS! SO WHEN STEVE ASKED ME TO

MARRY HIM... I FOR THE
WHOLE SHOW, LIZ! I'M
BOSS! YOU'LL HAVE
EVERYTHING YOU WANT!
THERE ARE SUNDRIES
JUMP WHEN I SAY
SOMETHIN'!

ARE THERE
OTHER WIVES
AT THE
LOGGING CAMP,
STEVE?



NOPE! IT'S AGAINST THE RULES! WOMEN MEAN TROUBLE! I DON'T LIKE TROUBLE! NO...NO WOMEN! IT'S THE RULE!

THEN HOW COULD I?



I MAKE THE RULES! I CAN CHANGE 'EM! FROM NOW ON, NO WOMEN...CEPT MY WIFE!

WHAT ABOUT THE WOMEN, STEVE? WHO WILL THEY SAY?



JUS' LET ONE OF 'EM SAY A WORD! JUS' LET ONE OF 'EM LOOK AT YOU THE WRONG WAY! I'LL TEACH HIM THAT WHAT I SAY DOES!

OH, STEVE! YOU'RE SO...SO MASTERFUL!

MASTERFUL, MY RECK! STEVE WAS AN ANIMAL... A BIG LUMBERING BRUTE! HE RULED THE MEN WHO WORKED FOR HIM WITH GREEN MUSCULAR FORCE! AND I LOVED IT...

ALL RIGHT, YOU GUYS! NOW LISTEN T'ME! THIS IS MY WIFE! SHE'S GONNA LIVE HERE WIT' ME IN THE CAMP! HER NAME IS MRS. DIXON! GET IT?

HEY! I GOT A WIFE AT HOME! NIN I READ FOR HER?



GET THIS STRAIGHT, YOU LAME-BRAINED LOG-ROLLERS! I'M THE BOSS HERE, SEE? RULES DON'T APPLY TO ME! NO WOMEN! THAT'S THE RULES! NOW GET ON ABOUT YER WORK! AN' REMEMBER! THERE'S A LADY AMONGST US NOW! WATCH YER LANGUAGE!

SHE USED TO CHIRP IN THE SILVER DOLLAR SALOON! LADY! HAH!

WHEN THE JACK MADE THAT CHACK ABOUT ME, I THOUGHT STEVE'S FACE WOULD START SMOKING, IT GOT SO RED! HE FISHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE LOGGERS TO THE ONE WHO'D DROPPED THE BOMB...

I SAID MY WIFE IS A LADY! SHE GON'T LIKE TO BE INSULTED!

I... I WAS GONNA KIDNAP, STEVE! I...

STEVE LACED OUT WITH A BOURNEHOUSE THAT SMASHED INTO THE FUNNY GUY'S FACE! BLOOD STARTED GUSHIN' FROM HIS NOSE, AND HE CAVED IN LIKE HIS KNEES WERE MADE OF JELLY...



STEVE STOOD OVER HIM, GLARING AT THE REST OF THE LUMBERJACKS. ANYBODY ELSE WANT T'BE COMMINCED 'BOUT HOW I EXPECT MY WIFE T'BE TREATED?



OH-MAH, WE GET YOU, STEVE!

THE MAN MOVED OFF, CRUMBLIN'... AND THE GUY THAT STEVE HIT GOT TO HIS FEET AND STUMBLED AWAY NURDIN' HIS BLEEDIN' NOSE.

SEE, STEVE! YOU GOTTA SURE TREAT 'EM ROUGH! TREAT 'EM LIKE THAT! OTHERWISE, THEY THINK THEY CAN GET AWAY WIT' SOMETHIN'.



THE MEN WERE SURE I COULD TELL! THEY WERE MAD 'CAUSE STEVE BROUGHT ME TO THE CAMP.

I GOT A WIFE! WHY CAN'T I BRING HER IF HE'S GOT HIS HERE?

'CAUSE HE'S THE BOSS! HE'S EXTRA SPECIAL!



THEY TREATED ME LIKE TYPHOID MARY! THEY STEERED CLEAR, WHICH WAS GRAY WITH ME! I'D HAD ENOUGH OF THEIR KIND BACK IN TOWN.



HEY! HERE COMES MR. DIXON!

BREAK IT UP!

I REALLY GOT A TASTE OF LUMBERCAMP LIFE IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS! THE MORE I SAW OF IT, THE MORE I HATED IT! THEN... ONE DAY... A STRANGER BLEW INTO CAMP.



WHAT YUH WANT, KIDDO?

I'M LOOKING FOR A JOB! ANY OPENINGS?

HE WAS YOUNG... MAYBE NINETEEN... AND HANDSOME! AND HE WAS BUILT RIGHT! NOT LIKE STEVE. NOT SO BIG AND MUSCULAR! HE WAS LITHE... TRIM.



DID YUH GOT AN AYE?

YEP! WITH SWAGGER! ONE SINCE I GOTT SCHOOL!

STEVE POINTED TO A LOG NEARBY.

LET'S SEE HOW FAST YOU CAN CUT THROUGH THAT SECTION THERE!

SURE THING!



THE KID PICKED UP AN AXE AND STOOD ON THE LOG WITH HIS FEET SPREAD APART! HE GRINNED AT STEVE, AND HE SHOWED NICER WHITE, EVEN TEETH...

JUST SAY THE WORD, AND I'LL BEGIN!

GO AHEAD! START!



THE AXE STARTED COM' UP AN' DOWN! I NEVER SEEN ANYBODY MOVE SO FAST! PRETTY SOON THE KID'D HACKED A WEDGE ALMOST HALF-WAY THROUGH ONE SIDE OF THE LOG...

HEY, FUZZ! LOOKA THE KID!

WOW!



TWEN HE TURNED AROUND AND STARTED CHOPPIN' AWAY ON THE OTHER SIDE! PRETTY SOON THE LOG WAS CUT CLEAN THROUGH...

THERE? FIRST DASH... ENOUGH?

HEHEHE! NOT BAD!

NOT BAD?



THE KID'S AXE-WORK HAD ATTRACTED SOME OF THE BOYS, AND THEY'D GATHERED AROUND TO WATCH.

HEY, THAT'S THE FASTEST CHOPPIN' I'VE SEEN IN A LONG TIME! WHAT'S YER NAME, KID?

TEED! EVER DONE ANY LOG-CHOPPIN' IN THE ANNUAL CONTESTS, TED?



I SHOT A LOOK AT STEVE, AND I COULD SEE HE WAS COMIN' TO A BOIL 'CAUSE THE JACKS WERE FUSSIN' OVER THE KID...

SHUCK!

HEY, FUZZ! WITH MORGAN HERE IN THE CHOPPIN' AND YOU IN THE ROLLIN', WE COULD CAPTURE THE FOURNEY!

ALL RIGHT! CUT IT!



STEVE WAS REAL MAD! HE STARTED SCOUTIN'...

NODDY TOLD YOU GUYS TO SHUT MOUTH! THIS IS NO SHOW! GO ON! GET BACK TO YOUR TREET! AND MAKE IT SNAPPY!

THE MEN SHUFFLE OFF QUIETLY, AND STEVE TURNED TO THE BOYS...

IF YOU WANT A JUD, YER BUT IT! BUT GET THIS! THAT YOURNEY STUFF IS ON YOUR OWN TIME! ON MY TIME, YER BACK, FAY-WOOD, UNDERSTAND?

L. UNDERSTAND! AND THANKS! THANKS FOR THE JOB!



ED THE MORGAN KID CAME TO WORK FOR STEVE RIGHT OFF THE BAT. THE OLDER LUMBERJACKS TOOK A SHINE TO HIM...

YOU'RE CRAP, TED! WITH YOU IN THE LOG-DROPPIN' EVENT, WE'RE A GINCH TO WIN THIS YEAR!

SEE, FELLERS? I HOPE I DON'T LET YOU DOWN!

STEVE BEAT ON THE KID'S NECK THOUGH! I GUESS HE RESPECTED HIS YOUTH AND ABILITY...

CUT THE SAB AND GET TO WORK, YOU CRUMBS!

SURE THING, MR. DIXON!

AS FOR ME, IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE KID, I WOULD'VE WALKED OUT ON STEVE LONG AGO! I WAS GETTIN' PRETTY SICK AND TIRED OF STEVE'S BULLYIN'...

HEY, MORGAN! I WERE FOR A MINUTE!

OH! EVENIN', MR. DIXON! ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?

MAYBE IT WAS THE WAY HE LOOKED? MAYBE IT WAS JUST HIS YOUTH? I DON'T KNOW! ANYWAY, I DECIDED THAT MORGAN WAS FOR ME...

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF, TED! HOW DO YOU LIKE BEING A LUMBER-JACK?

IT'S OKAY, MA'AM! I LIKE IT FINE! 'CEPT 'CEPT FOR MR. DIXON!



I'M NOT HARD ON YOU, TED! NO REASON TO BE STAND-OFFISH WITH ME!

ER... I GOTTA BE GOIN' MA'AM! THE BOYS'RE WAITIN' ON ME! GOTTA PRACTICE FOR THE TOURNAMENT!



ONE THING, THOUGH! THE KID WAS DUMB! HE COULDN'T SEE THAT I WAS PLAYIN' UP TO HIM...

OH! STEVE GOT YOU GOIN', TED! AN, DON'T MIND HIM! I DON'T!

AWW? ER... WELL... HE'S THE JOBS, MA'AM! IF ONLY HE WEREN'T SO HARD ON US GUYS!



YOU MIGHT SAY I LOST THE FIRST ROUND WITH THE MORGAN KID! AS HE SAUNTERED OFF, I MADE UP MY MIND...

I'LL GET YOU YET, KID! YOU'LL SEE!

NIGHT, MA'AM!





I WAS REALLY SURPRISED WHEN HE SHOVED ME AWAY! THE DUMB STUFF! WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, TED? AREN'T YOU INTERESTED... EVEN A LITTLE?

LOOK, MA'AM! WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO AWAY AND LEAVE ME ALONE? YOU DON'T INTEREST ME AT ALL!



THE YOUNG SQUIRT! I GOT 2000 AND WAS NOBODY! LIZ DIANE SAYS AND GETS AWAY WITH IT! I DECIDED TO TEACH THE NO A LESSON...

STEVE! STEVE! HELP!

HUH? SEE, MA'AM! WHAT'S THE MATTER?



STEVE CAME THROUGH THE WOODS ON THE DOUBLE! I MISSED MY HAIR UP A BIT TO MAKE IT LOOK GOOD! YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN STEVE'S FACE WHEN HE SPED US...

WHAT THE F? SOB SOB HE... HE TRIED TO... SHE'S CRAZY, MR. DIXON!



STEVE'S FACE, BLUSHED DRUNK! HIS EYES WIDENED IN ANGER! HE JUDGE AT THE KID.

I'LL TEACH YOU TO FOOL AROUND WITH MY WIFE, YOU DIRT!

WAIT! I CAN EXPLAIN.



MORGAN WAS NO MATCH FOR STEVE, ESPECIALLY WITH THE FIGHTING TACTICS STEVE USED! HE DUMPED TED AND PICKED UP A LARGE ROCK.

STEVE! DON'T! YOU'LL KILL HIM!



STEVE BROUGHT THE ROCK DOWN ON MORGAN'S TEMPLE! I THOUGHT HE'D CRUSHED THE KID'S HEAD, BUT IT WAS A GLANCING BLOW! I SCREAMED! THE JACKS CAME RUNNING.



GRAB HIM!

HE'LL JUST OPEN THE KID'S NOSE IF HE HITS HIM AGAIN!

THEY PULLED STEVE OFF THE KID AND CARRIED HIS UNCONSCIOUS BODY TO CAMP! HE WAS OUT COLD FOR TWO DAYS! WHEN HE FINALLY CAME TO...



THE LIGHTS! TURN ON THE LIGHTS! I CAN'T SEE...

IT'S BROAD DAYLIGHT!

HE... HE'S BLIND!

THE CAMP WAS ABNORMALLY QUIET FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS! I STERES CLEAR OF THE MEN... ESPECIALLY THE KID! STEVE'S BLINDED HIM... PERMANENTLY...

WEE, FELLERS! I LET YOU DOWN! GUESS THE FOURNEY'S LOST NOW!



IT SOUNDS CRAZY, BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED! FUE AND THE OTHER JACKS STARTED TO TEACH THE KID TO GROP LOSS... EVEN THOUGH HE WAS BLIND...



THAT'S IT, KID! KEEP THEM STOKED CLEAN, KID!

THEY KEPT AT IT FOR WEEKS... RIGHT UP TO THE TOURNAMENT DATE... PRACTICING THE KID FENCE I SNEAKED OVER TO WATCH! HE WAS PRETTY BAD...



ATTA BOY, KID! TERRIFIC! THEY'RE JUST MAKIN' HIM FEEL GOOD!

ACTUALLY, THE KID'S AIM WAS POOR! HE COULDN'T MAKE A GREAT WEDGE! HIS CUT WAS SLOPPY... AND HE WAS SLOW! ON THE EVE OF THE TOURNEY...

DAY, MR. DIXON! MRS. DIXON! SO WHAT? YOU WRA O'NON! MORGAN'S READY FOR HIS LAST PRACTICE SESSION! INTERESTED? O'NON!



STEVE DIDN'T DARE OBJECT WITH THE KNIFE-BLADE PRESSING AGAINST HIS NECK! THAT'S ONE THING MUSCLES CAN'T BEAT... COLD STEEL! HE WENT QUIETLY! I WENT TOO!

GRAT! I'M BOTH UP! AND FOR 'EM, TOO! SAY I'M GOOD!



WHAT THE? STEVE! WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO DO?

I SOON FOUND OUT WHAT THEY WERE GOING TO DO! LOOK! YES... THE KID IS ON THAT LOG! HE'S PRACTICING FOR THE EVENT HE THINKS HE'S ENTERED IN! HE'S ALMOST CUT THROUGH THE LOG NOW! THE TROUBLE IS, THE LOG IS HOLLOW... AND STEVE IS INSIDE! THEO AND BAGGED...



ATTA BOY, TED!

JUST A LITTLE MORE, KID!

YOU'LL BE GREAT, TOMORROW!



...AND I'M NEXT!

HERE'S A GRIPPING TALE OF TENSION WITH
AN ELECTRIFYING FINAL TWIST!

CONFESSION

IT WAS NEARLY MIDNIGHT WHEN ARTHUR KEENAN SWUNG HIS GREY SEDAN INTO THE DESERTED STREET! THE BEAM FROM THE SINGLE HEADLIGHT CUT THROUGH THE DARKNESS ILLUMINATING THE ROAD AHEAD! ARTHUR STRAINED HIS EYES AND CURSED...

BLASTED BUSTED HEADLIGHT!
SO BETTER HAVE IT FIXED FIRST
THING IN THE MORNING! CAN'T
SEE A THING THIS WAY!

**A SHOCK
SUSPENSE STORY**



SUDDENLY THE LONE HEADLIGHT BEAM FELL UPON SOMETHING LYING ON THE COBBLESTONES AHEAD OF ARTHUR'S SLOWLY-MOVING CAR! ARTHUR GASPED...



ARTHUR SLAMMED ON THE BRAKES AND HIS CAR SCOOLED TO A STOP! THE FIGURE IN THE HEADLIGHT BEAM LAY MOTIONLESS IN A POOL OF BLOOD! ARTHUR LEAPED FROM THE CAR AND RUSHED TO THE PROSTRATE WOMAN'S SIDE...



ARTHUR LOOKED AROUND, FRANTICALLY! THE DARK
FACES OF THE BUILDINGS LOOMED UP ABOUT HIM!
THIS WAS A FACTORY SECTION! THERE WERE NO
LIGHTS... NO PHONES AVAILABLE AT THIS HOUR!
ARTHUR DARTED BACK TO HIS CAR.



MUSTN'T MOVE HER! HAVE
TO GET TO A PHONE! HAVE TO
CALL AN AMBULANCE! SHE'S
DYING!

ARTHUR BACKED HIS CAR UP SUDDENLY! THE GEARS
COUGHED A PROTEST AS HE MESHED THEM INTO FIRST
AND SPED OFF DOWN THE DARK STREET! AT THAT
MOMENT A POLICE PATROL CAR TURNED THE CORNER
BEHIND HIM...



LOOK, FLAGG!
THERE'S SOMEONE
LYIN' IN THE
BUTTER!

AND THAT
CAR'S NIGHT-DRIVIN'
IT OUT OF THERE!
LET'S GO!

THE PATROL CAR SURGED FOR-
WARD, SKIDDING TO A STOP BEHIND
THE INJURED WOMAN...



SHE'S BEEN HIT
BY A CAR!

SEE WHAT
YOU CAN DO,
FLAGG! I'M
GOIN' AFTER
THAT LOUZY
HIT-AND-RUN!

THE POLICE OFFICER NAMED
FLAGG LEAPED FROM THE SQUAD
CAR...! GRAY, FILEY! DON'T
WORRY!



RADIO IN FOR AN
AMBULANCE! I'LL
WAIT HERE!... AND
SET 'EM!

THE SQUAD CAR ROARED OFF IN
PURSUIT AS THE OFFICER REMAIN-
ING STOOD OVER THE CRUMPLED
FORM...



AN AMBULANCE
WON'T DO THIS GAL,
ANY GOOD! SHE'S
DEAD!

MEANWHILE, ARTHUR KEENAN SPED THROUGH THE
DESERTED FACTORY SECTION, LOOKING FOR AN OPEN
DINER... A POLICE CALL-BOX... ANYTHING THAT
MIGHT HELP HIM SUMMON AID FOR THE INJURED
WOMAN HE'D JUST LEFT BEHIND HIM, THE SQUAD
CAR FLASHED AFTER HIM... ITS SIREN SCREAMING...



MUST FIND A PHONE! MUST...
WHY THAT'S THAT?
SOUNDS LIKE A...

THE SQUAD CAR DREW UP ALONGSIDE, FORCING
ARTHUR TO THE CURB! THE SIRENS OF SQUADS AND
THE DYING WHINE OF THE SIREN ECHOED OFF THE
EMPTY LOFT BUILDINGS...



OFFICER! THERE'S A
WOMAN BACK THERE!
SHE...

GRAY, BUDDY! COME
OUT OF THERE WITH
YOUR HANDS UP! UP
HIGH! AND NO POINT
BUSINESS!

THE PRISON STATION BUZZED WITH EXCITEMENT! ARTHUR KEENAN STOOD BEFORE THE DEER SERGEANT... HIS HAIR MUSSOED... HIS CLOTHES DISHEVELED! HE WAS FLANKED BY THE TWO RADIO CAR OFFICERS WHO'D ARRESTED HIM! A DETECTIVE SHOUTED AT A SWITCH-BORG OPERATOR! OTHERS STOOD ABOUT, GLARING!



WHAT'S YOUR NAME, PUNK?

KEENAN! ARTHUR KEENAN! BUT YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG...

SHUT UP, YOU MURDERING RAT!

TRY AND LOCATE LIEUTENANT STALEY, CHARLIE! TELL 'IM WE JUST PICKED UP A HIT - AND - RUN! THE WOMAN HE HIT IS DEAD!

YES, SIR!

ARTHUR BEGAN TO SOB! ONE OF THE DETECTIVES, SHOOKED AT HIM.

YOU MADE A BIG MISTAKE THIN! 'R' AWAY, 'KEENAN' A BIG MISTAKE!

I DIDN'T DO IT. I TELL YOU! I WAS GOING FOR...



I'VE HEARD THAT, RECKON THE W-ND SAYS HE DIDN'T DO IT!

TELL 'IM WE GOT WAPS TO MAKE SURE LIKE HIM CONFESS, MASON!



WHY DON'T YOU SAVE YOURSELF A LOT OF OVER-KEENAN! ADMIT IT!

I DIDN'T DO IT, I TELL YOU! I WAS AR-... HERE'S THE LIEUTENANT, SIR! HE JUST GOT HOME!

HELLO, LIEUTENANT! THIS IS MASON, HERE! WE JUST HAILED IN A HIT - AND - RUN! OFFICERS FLAG AND RILEY CAUGHT HIM RED-HANDED! KILLED A WOMAN!

KILLED, BUT GOT A CONFESSION!



WOT HET LIEUTENANT! THE CHIEF DENIES IT! WE'RE GONNA WORK 'IM OVER NOW! THOUGHT YOU WIGHT LIKE TO BIT IN!

I'LL BE DOWN AS SOON AS MY WIFE GETS IN, MASON! SHE WENT TO A SHOW! COULD TO BE BACK SOON!



ALL RIGHT, DETECTIVE BECKER! HE'S ALL YOURS!

O'MON, KEENAN! YOU, ME, AND MASON'RE GONNA HAVE A NICE LIL' CHAT!

BUT I DIDN'T DO IT, I TELL YOU!

O'WELL, LIEUTENANT! I GOTTA GO NOW, SEE YOU LATER!

THE ROOM WAS DARK, EXCEPT FOR ONE BRILLIANT LIGHT THAT HUNG ABOVE THEM! ARTHUR SHOOK HIS HEAD AS THEY FIRED QUESTIONS AT HIM.

THEY FOUND GLASS ALL AROUND THE BODY, KEENAN! YOUR CAR'S GOT A BUSTED HEADLIGHT? YOU STILL DENY IT?

I SWEAR THAT HEAD-LIGHT LAST WEEK! PLEASE! LET ME SIT DOWN! I'M TIRED!

YOU'LL STAND, YOU M'FUCKER! WHEN YOU DECIDE TO ADMIT IT, YOU CAN SIT DOWN!

I DIDN'T DO IT! I DIDN'T DO IT! I DIDN'T DO IT!

HOW MUCH DID YOU HAVE TO DRINK, KEENAN? YOU STINK FROM IT!

I HAD TWO! ONLY TWO! I WAS AT A PARTY TONIGHT! YOU CAN ASK THEM! I ONLY HAD TWO SMALL DRINKS!

YOU WERE DRUNK, WEREN'T YOU, KEENAN? YOU COULDN'T STOP IN TIME! AFTER YOU HIT HER, YOU GOT SOBER! YOU RAN!

NO! NO! SHE WAS THERE WHEN I DROVE UP! I WAS GOING FOR HELP! I... OWWWWW!

SHUT UP! YOU'RE LYING! LIES! PUNK! DON'T TRY TO WORM YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS! WE'LL MAKE YOU ADMIT IT!

I'M TELLING... FOR THE TRUTH!

YOU'RE LYING! YOU WERE DRUNK! YOU HIT HER SO HARD, YOU SMASHED YOUR HEADLIGHT!

GET FINE, KEENAN! SAVE YOURSELF SOME PAIN! LEAVE US THE TROUBLE OF GETTING IT OUT OF YOUR ADMIT IT!

I DIDN'T DO IT! SHE WAS THERE WHEN I... OWWWWW!

YOU LYIN' SON-OF-A-BITCH! I'LL MAKE YOU TALK!

MY ARM! YOU'RE BREAKING IT! OWWWWW!

TALK, KEENAN! TALK!

WHERE IS HE? WHERE IS THAT BODENW... OWWWWW!

LIEUTENANT!



IT WENT ON LIKE THAT FOR HOURS. HIS CLOTHES WERE TORN. HIS NOSE BLEEDING. HIS FACE BATTERED AND BRUISED. OTHER DETECTIVES TOOK OVER. THEY WORKED IN SHIFTS. PUMMELING. THREATENING.. CURSING. THE LIGHTS RAN. JUST SAT. WAITING.



NIGHT PASSED AND DAWN CAME INSIDE THE PRISON, THEN WORK WENT ON THE PUNISHMENT CONTINUED.



OUTSIDE THE LITTLE ROOM WITH THE SINGLE OVERHEAD LIGHT, THE DETECTIVE NAMED DOYLE WHISPERED TO THE LIEUTENANT...

GOT THIS LAP REPORT, SAYS NO BLOOD ON THE CAR! DENTS ARE OLD. MAYBE A WEEK! GLASS FRAGMENTS ARE FROM HEADLIGHTS OF A STANDARD MANUFACTURER!

SO WHAT, DOYLE?

MAYBE HE DIDN'T DO IT, SURE! MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO TAKE IT EASY WITH HIM?

HE KILLED MY WIFE, DOYLE! HE'S GONNA ADMIT IT!

HE COULD BE TELLING THE TRUTH, LIEUTENANT! ALL WE'VE GOT IS HIS BUSTED HEAD-LIGHT AS EVIDENCE! MAYBE HIS STORY IS TRUE! MAYBE HE DID BUST IT LAST WEEK WHEN HE HIT THAT FENCE!

TOO MUCH OF A CONSIDERED, DOYLE! THE BOYS'LL MAKE HIM TALK! YOU'LL SEE!



SURE THEY'LL MAKE HIM TALK! THEY COULD MAKE ANYBODY TALK! THEY'VE BEEN GRILLING HIM FOR TEN HOURS NOW!

IF I WANT YOUR ADVICE, I'LL ASK FOR IT, DOYLE! WATCH WHAT YOU SAY OR YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF 'POUNDING' AN EAST-SIDE BEAT AGAIN!



THE LIEUTENANT WENT BACK INTO THE DARK ROOM WITH THE LIGHT! THE GRILLING CONTINUED...

N-NO! P-PLEASE! DON'T HIT ME WITH THAT LEAD PIPE... SOB... SOB...

THEN ADMIT YOU KILLED HER, YOU SUNK 'SLOW TALK'!



WELL... I DIDN'T DO IT! WON'T YOU PLEASE BELIEVE ME... SOB... SOB...

HE'S STUBBORN, LIEUTENANT!

HERE! DYMME THAT PIPE! LET ME CONVINCE HIM!



OUTSIDE THE GRILLING-ROOM, DETECTIVE DOYLE WHISPERED AS THE LEAD PIPE RELL AGAIN AND AGAIN, AND THE SUSPECT'S CRIES OF PAIN DRAFTED THROUGH THE THICK DOOR...

TALK... UHM... YOU UHM... MURDERIN' UHM... RAT! TALK UHM... BLAST... UHM JOU!

YAAA-AA YAAA-EEEEE!



ARTHUR KERRAN LAY SPRAWLED ON HIS STOMACH, BLOOD TRICKLING FROM HIS TOOTHLESS MOUTH! ONE EYE WAS COMPLETELY CLOSED! THE BONES IN HIS NOSE WERE SPLINTERED! HIS SCALP HAD BEEN OPENED... HIS HAIR WAS MATTED WITH STICKY GOOP! HE GORGED...



"N-NO... MORE?... I DID IT? PLEASE! SOB... SOBING... MORE?"

"SIGN THIS, KERRAN?"

"OHAY, LIEUTENANT! THAT WRAPS IT UP!"

OUTSIDE THE DARK ROOM, DETECTIVE DOYLE LOOKED QUESTIONINGLY AT LIEUTENANT STALEY AS HE EMERGED.

"HE TALKED, DOYLE! HE FINALLY ADMITTED IT! I TOLD YOU HE WOULD!"

"YES, SIM? YOU DID! CONGRATULATIONS! I GUESS I WAS WRONG!"



LIEUTENANT STALEY WENT OUT OF THE STATION INTO THE WARM AFTERNOON AIR! HE STOPPED ON THE STEPS TO LIGHT A CIGAR...



THEN HE STARTED FOR HOME! ON THE WAY, HE STOPPED OFF AT A STORE...



WHEN HE CAME OUT, HE CARRIED A PACKAGE...



UPON REACHING HIS HOUSE, THE LIEUTENANT WENT DIRECTLY TO HIS GARAGE...



WHERE HE UNWRAPPED THE NEW HEADLIGHT HE'D PURCHASED.



AND, AFTER CLEANING HIS WIFE'S BLOOD FROM HIS CAR, KERRAN REMOVED THE BROKEN HEADLIGHT IN ORDER TO REPLACE IT...



THE END

SCIENCE FICTION FANS!

FOR THE BEST IN THE NEW SCIENCE-FANTASY FIELD...FOR A MAGAZINE JAMPACKED WITH ASTOUNDING, AMAZING, AND EERIE ADVENTURES INTO THE FANTASTIC...FOR SCIENTIFIC SUSPENSE STORIES AT THEIR ILLUSTRATED BEST, READ...



ANOTHER
"NEW TREND"
SURE-FIRE WINNER!



ON SALE NOW
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!


LAST RIDE!

Cautiously he squirmed past the tiny emergency door, hearing his breath echo explosively through the shaft. Rising to his feet, he wiped his forehead with the back of his hand and looked up to the elevator car poised far overhead. The hint of a grin crossed the corners of his mouth: it was all going to work out perfectly. Within 5 minutes the elevator would ascend to the Penthouse and, when it started down, it would be bringing his wife on her last ride!

He slipped a pair of heavy steel nippers from his pocket and slowly fastened the bulky instrument around the control-cable which governed the elevator's movement. The metal threads which were twisted together to make up the thick cable began to separate under the pressure of his straining hand. He felt his stomach knotting with the effort necessary to cut through the tough metal...in about 2 minutes the severed edges showed that only a single thread in the center of the cable remained uncut. It was strong enough to get the car up to the Penthouse when his wife signalled for it...enough to start her toward the meeting he had previously arranged by telephone. Her meeting with DEATH!

His preparations were complete. Crouching down in the shaft, he kept his eye on the control panel which indicated the elevator's whereabouts. All he had to do was wait now...and go over in his mind the path which had led to this impending triumph. For it would be a triumph: his wife's death would free him from the fear of divorce...a separation which was designed to cut him off from her fortune!

This idea of his was the solution to all his worries; so simple yet ingenious a scheme that



SALVATION!

With a shudder of fear, as he crouched low in the wobbling freight car, Bancroft heard the sound of heavy footsteps reverberating across the rooftops. . . a railroad dick was making his inspection of the moving train! He was trapped, Bancroft realized. . . with the evidence of his crime right on his own back! Robbing that stalled motorist back on the highway had been easy enough, but hopping the freight . . . which seemed such a wonderful idea at the time . . . was going to lead to his capture! For the tweed jacket and flannel pants he was wearing stuck out on him like a sore thumb. The dude wore too fancy for someone who hopped rides on freights, the detective would undoubtedly think the clothing mighty fishy and hold him for the state police. And the guy Bancroft had robbed . . . though he had been knocked unconscious before he had a chance to see his assailant . . . could easily identify those clothes! His jacket and pants, Bancroft realized, were enough to convict him!

The footsteps were closer now. To jump off . . . with a drop of 200 feet on either side of the tracks . . . was suicide! And to be picked up by the dick meant positive identification through the stuff he was wearing. *Some choice* Bancroft muttered. *Immediate death or ten years in the state pen!*

A sudden movement across the freight car caught his eye. Someone was crouching there . . . a guy Bancroft hadn't seen as he climbed aboard when the train had slowed down for water-pickup. Across the railing car the men gazed suspiciously at one another, and in that instant Bancroft knew that his salvation was at hand! The other guy was much smaller, and Bancroft had little trouble wrenching him to

the floor and knocking him unconscious with a piece of loose planking. It was the work of a moment to rip the guy's rotted and grimy clothing from his body and change costumes with the unconscious tramp. The dick's footsteps were only 3 cars away when Bancroft pushed his victim through the open freight door. The tweed jacket and flannel pants rolled clear of the speeding train . . . in an instant they were gone from sight, along with the hum who was going to save Bancroft from arrest. *Let 'em pick me up now*, Bancroft thought as he fingered the clothing which felt so clammy and wet under his touch. *I'm ready!*

The detective was in the car now, moving menacingly toward Bancroft, who got up sheepishly to meet the man. All that could happen was that he'd be thrown off the train at the next slow-down! But the dick had stopped abruptly and was staring incredulously at Bancroft. Then, in one movement, he had pulled a gun from his jacket and was yanking on the emergency cord.

His gun leveled at Bancroft's chest, the beefy detective spoke: "The Law'll be happy to collar YOU," he rasped. "After what you pulled, you shoulda had the brains to get rid of them duds!"

Instinctively, Bancroft looked down at his clothing: the clamminess he had experienced was due to the fact that the soiled and matted material was covered with still slick blood!

"*They've got you cold,*" the dick was saying as the train jerked to a stop. "Examination of the blood on your shirt'll be enough to hang you for that murder over in Kent just an hour ago!"

THIS SCIENCE-FICTION STORY WITH ITS
SURPRISE ENDING SHOULD STARTLE YOU!

STRICTLY BUSINESS!



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY

THE VACUUM-LIFT SPED UPWARD CARRYING DIANNE MASTERS TO THE TWO-HUNDRETH LEVEL IN A MATTER OF SECONDS! THE LIFT'S DOORS SLID OPEN NOISELESSLY AND DIANNE STEPPED OUT ONTO THE SUN-LIT, PLUSH-CARPETED TERRACE! SHE MOVED DOWN THE CORRIDOR BETWEEN THE GLASS WALL AND THE LINE OF APARTMENT DOORS...

BEHIND DIANNE, THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CITY BEAMED IN THE MORNING SUNLIGHT! SHE RAISED A NERVOUS FINGER AND PRESSED THE BELL-BUTTON! INSIDE A HELIODIC CHIME RESOUNDED, AND FOOT-STEPS APPROACHED! THE DOOR TO 200-B SLID OPEN AND A TALL, DARK-EYED, HANDSOME MAN SMILED AT HER...

YES? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
MY NAME IS DIANNE MASTERS! I'M HERE ABOUT THE ADVERTISEMENT YOU PUBLISHED IN THE MORNING TELE-PAPER...





THE STRANGER NODDED AND STEPPED BACK...

AM? YES? COME IN!

THANK YOU!

DIANNE ENTERED THE APARTMENT! SHE GLANCED ABOUT AT THE EXQUISITE FURNISHINGS...

LIKE WHAT YOU SEE, MISS MASTERS?

OH, YES! IT'S VERY NICE, MR. MR.

CRAVEN. ALREADY CRAVEN! SIT DOWN, MISS MASTERS!

YOU'D BETTER TELL ME ABOUT YOUR OFFER, MR. CRAVEN!



MY OFFER IS VERY SIMPLE, MISS MASTERS! I NEED A WIFE! IN RETURN, I CAN SUPPLY MY PROSPECTIVE WIFE WITH ALL OF THE LUXURIES OUR SOCIETY AFFORDS!

A WIFE? BUT THE AD SAID THIS WAS A BUSINESS OFFER!

IT'S, MISS MASTERS! AS YOU SEE, I HAVE ALL THE WEALTH I NEED TO LIVE COMFORTABLY! HOWEVER, IT IS NECESSARY FOR ME, AS PART OF MY WORK, TO ASSUME AN AIR OF RESPECTABILITY! OUR MARRIAGE WOULD BE JUST THAT... A BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT!

NOW... HOW LONG WOULD THIS... THIS ARRANGEMENT LAST, MR. CRAVEN?



THE USUAL THREE-YEAR MARRIAGE-CONTRACT PERIOD, MISS MASTERS! AT THAT TIME WE'LL NEGOTIATE TO RENEW! AND THE AUTOMATIC DIVORCE WILL BE INVOKED!

I SEE! AND THE TERMS?

STRICTLY BUSINESS, MISS MASTERS! WE WILL OCCUPY SEPARATE ROOMS! WE WILL GO AND COME AS WE PLEASE! IT WILL BE A MARRIAGE IN NAME ONLY! YOUR SALARY WILL BE HIGH... VERY HIGH!

BEFORE I GIVE MY ANSWER, MR. CRAVEN, I'D LIKE TO KNOW JUST WHAT YOU FIND THAT YOU MUST BE MARRIED!



MR. CRAVEN'S FACE DARKENED.
HE LOOKED AT DIANNE STERNLY...

AS I SAID, MISS MASTERS, YOU
THIS WILL BE A BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT!
MY REASONS ARE MY OWN
BUSINESS! I EXPECT
YOU TO MIND YOURS!
UNDERSTAND?



I'M SORRY, MISS
MASTERS! I JUST
DON'T LOVE
PEOPLE THAT
PAY!



DO YOU
MIND IF
I ASK HOW
MUCH YOU'RE
PAYING FOR
THIS... THIS
BUSINESS
DEAL?

**\$10,000 PER
YEAR! THAT'S
\$30,000 FOR
THE THREE
YEAR PERIOD!**



THAT... THAT'S
A LOT OF
MONEY, MR.
CRAVEN!...
I ACCEPT
YOUR OFFER!

BY THAT YEAR IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY,
MARRIAGE LAWS HAD CHANGED CONSIDERABLY! THE
MARRIAGE LICENSE HAD BECOME LIKE THE TWENTIETH
CENTURY AUTOMOBILE LICENSE! IT HAD TO BE RENEWED!
COUPLES WHO HAD NO DESIRE TO REMAIN MARRIED HAD
ONLY TO LET THEIR MARRIAGE EXPIRE! THE DIVORCE
COURT HAD VANISHED! THE HAPPILY MARRIED
MERELY RENEWED THEIR LICENSE... THEREBY RENEW-
ING, ALSO, THEIR DEVOTION...

AND SO, DIANNE MASTERS BECAME MRS. ALEO
CRAVEN FOR A THREE YEAR PERIOD...

THIS WILL BE YOUR ROOM,
DIANNE! YOU'LL FIND EVERY-
THING YOU NEED IN THE
CLOSETTS AND DRAWERS.

IT'S... IT'S
LOVELY, ALEO!



WELCOME HERE PLEASE,
MISS MASTERS!

YES, SIR!



ALEO DREW HIS WALLET FROM HIS POCKET...

HERE'S YOUR FIRST YEAR'S SALARY
IN ADVANCE, DIANNE! TEN
THOUSAND DOLLARS! I HOPE
OUR ARRANGEMENT WILL BE
SATISFACTORY TO BOTH
OF US!

AREN'T YOU
AFRAID I'LL
RUN AWAY
WITH THE MONEY,
ALEO?



I'D BE GETTING OFF CHEAP,
DIANNE! REMEMBER! YOU'RE
MARRIED TO ME FOR THE NEXT
THREE YEARS WHETHER YOU
STICK AROUND OR NOT! FOR
MY PURPOSES, THAT'S
GOOD ENOUGH!

I WAS ONLY
JOKING, ALEO!
I DON'T
RELISH ON
BUSINESS
DEALS! YOU
CAN TRUST
ME!



ALDO BID DIANNE GOOD-NIGHT AND CROSSED THE APARTMENT TO HIS OWN ROOM! DIANNE HESITATED, THEN LOCKED HER BEDROOM DOOR...

JUST TO MAKE SURE IT STAYS STRICTLY BUSINESS...MR. CRAYEN!



THEN DIANNE WENT TO THE HUGE WARDROBE CLOSET AND SLID THE DOORS OPEN! INSIDE HUNDREDS OF DRESSES AND SUITS HUNG NEATLY! DOZENS OF PAIRS OF SHOES LINED THE FLOOR-RACKS...

GASP! A WARDROBE! A COMPLETE... WONDERFUL WARDROBE...



NEXT SHE FLUNG OPEN THE DRESSING TABLE DRAWERS...

JEWELRY! DIAMONDS! RUBIES! EMERALDS! I...I...



DIANNE COULDN'T BELIEVE HER EYES...

MAKE-UP! PERFUMES! EVERYTHING A WOMAN COULD WANT!



IT WAS, INDEED, A VERY SATISFACTORY BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT FOR DIANNE! AND SO, ON HER WEDDING NIGHT...ADORNED WITH JEWELRY, ANOINTED WITH EXPENSIVE PERFUMES, WEARING AN EXPENSIVE GOWN... DIANNE CRAWLED INTO HER HIRE LAVISHLY UPHOLSTERED BED... ALONE, BUT HAPPY...

SIGH!



IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED, DIANNE TOOK TO HER NEW 'JOB' FEVERISHLY! ALDO WAS VERY PLEASED! OFTEN, AT NIGHT, HE WOULD ENTERTAIN! DIANNE PLAYED THE PERFECT HOSTESS...

YOU HAVE A CHARMING WIFE, CRAYEN!

THANK YOU, SENATOR!



ALDO WAS VERY SWEET TO DIANNE! THEIR RELATIONSHIP GREW WARMER AND WARMER...

YOU WERE EXCEPTIONALLY CHARMING TONIGHT, DIANNE!

THANK YOU, ALDO! I'M GLAD I PLEADED YOU!



BY THE END OF THE FIRST YEAR, DIANNE BEGAN TO WISH THAT HER MARRIAGE TO ALEC WAS... WELL... LESS BUSINESS-LIKE! BUT ALEC REMAINED SOLID.

WHAT DID YOU SAY, DEARY? I'M SORRY! I WAS READING!

I SAID I DIDN'T LOSE MY BEDROOM DOOR LAST NIGHT, ALEC!

OH? WELL, DON'T WORRY! YOU CAN TAKE ME! HMMM! I SEE IT'S TIME TO GO! SEE YOU TOMORROW, DIANNE!

"BYE, ALEC!"

SOS... SOS... SOS...



YES, DIANNE WAS UNHAPPY! SHE HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HER HUSBAND! AT FIRST IT HAD BEEN GRAND! CLOTHES... JEWELS... EVERYTHING A WOMAN COULD WANT! EVERYTHING, THAT IS, EXCEPT ALEC... THE ONE THING DIANNE WANTED...

GOOD-NIGHT, DIANNE! SEE YOU IN THE MORNING!

ALEC? I... I... COME HERE & MOMENT, PLEASE!



YES, DIANNE? WHAT IS IT?

ALEC! WE... WE'VE BEEN MARRIED FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS NOW! DON'T YOU THINK THAT IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU... YOU... KISSED ME?



I BOW YOUR PARDON, DIANNE! YOU'RE FORGETTING... THIS IS A BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT, STRICTLY BUSINESS!

ALEC! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU?

LOOK HERE, DIANNE! YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO FORGET TWO FOOLISHNESS! LOVE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION! WE MUST KEEP THIS RELATIONSHIP ON A FRIENDLY BUSINESS BASIS... NOTHING MORE!

ALEC DRAWN? I HATE YOU!



AS THE END OF THE THIRD YEAR DREW NEAR, DIANNE REALIZED THAT WITH IT CAME THE END OF THEIR MARRIAGE CONTRACT! SHE APPROACHED ALEC ONE NIGHT...

WE... OUR CONTRACT RUNS OUT IN THREE WEEKS, ALEC!

I KNOW, DEAR!



YOU'RE... YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WANT TO RENEW IT?

I'M AFRAID NOT, DEAR!



BUT ALEC! I LOVE YOU! DOESN'T THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU? I KNOW YOU COULD LEARN TO LOVE ME... IN TIME!

SORRY, DIANNE!



ALEC! YOU KNOW THAT A MARRIAGE CONTRACT AUTOMATICALLY RENEWS ITSELF IF THE WIFE IS EXPECTING A CHILD... DON'T YOU?

YES, DEAR! I KNOW!



ALEC! I'M EXPECTING A CHILD! OH... I KNOW YOU'LL DENY IT... BUT THEY'LL BELIEVE ME! NO MAN AND WOMAN COULD LIVE TOGETHER FOR THREE YEARS...

BUT YOU'RE MIS-TAKEN, DIANNE! WE COULD!



YOU WANTED TO KNOW WHY I NEEDED A WIFE? I'LL TELL YOU... NOW THAT OUR WORK IS COMPLETED! I BELONG TO A SPECIAL GROUP DEALING WITH THE SCIENCE OF CYBERNETICS! OUR WORK HAS BEEN SECRET! WE HAD TO APPEAR AS ORDINARY PEOPLE! YOU NOTICED THAT ALL OF MY ASSOCIATES THAT I'VE ENTERTAINED ARE MARRIED! WE COULDN'T AFFORD TO APPEAR SUSPICIOUS! IN THREE WEEKS, WE TAKE OVER... THERE ARE ENOUGH OF US NOW!



CYBERNETICS? BUT THAT... THAT...

YES, MY DEAR! THE SCIENCE OF MECHANICAL-ELECTRONIC LIFE! LOOK! SEE? YOU COULDN'T BE EXPECTING A CHILD... NOW, COULD YOU? NOT VERY WELL, WHEN YOUR HUSBAND IS A ROBOT!



BRACE YOURSELVES FOR THE SHOCKING
WIND-UP TO THIS JOLTING TALE!

UPPERCUT!



**A HORROR
SUSPENSE STORY**

YOUR NAME IS JOE WILEY? YOU'RE IN THE FIGHT RACKET... BEEN IN IT FOR YEARS? YOU'VE HAD LOTS OF BOYS, GOOD AND BAD? YOU'VE SEEN 'EM COME AND GO? IN FACT, JOE WILEY... RIGHT NOW YOU'RE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A NEW FIGHTER...

I NEED THE BROWN, MR. WILEY? I'M TRYIN' T'PUT MY KID BROTHER THROUGH MED SCHOOL!

DEAR, DION? GET INTO SOME TRUNKS AND GO A ROUND OR TWO! I WANNA SEE WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE!



YOU TAKE THEM WHEN THEY'RE GREEN, DON'T YOU, JOE WILEY? YOU TAKE 'EM YOUNG, AND YOU DRIVE 'EM. DRIVE 'EM TILL THEY'RE PUNCH-DRUNK AND SLOW! AND THEN AFTER YOU'VE MADE ALL YOU CAN ON 'EM, YOU DUMP 'EM AND LOOK FOR A NEW BOY.

HEY, FODD? GIVE THIS YOUNG GUY A WORKOUT! I WANNA SEE IF HE'S GOT ANY STUFF!

SURE THING, MR. WILEY? O'MON, FUD?



SO NOW YOU'RE WATCHING THE LATEST OF YOUR LONG LINE OF CRUMPS BEAT HIS BRAINS OUT... TRYING TO IMPRESS YOU...

KEEP YOUR LEFT UP, DIXON! STOP BACK-TRACKIN'! DRIVE IN!

PANT... YES... PANT... SIR...

YOU LISTEN TO THE FLAT SOLES SCRAPPING ON THE CANVAS... LISTEN TO THE GRUNTS AND GAGS OF THE TWO MEN ABOVE YOU AS THE GLOVES LAND... AND IT MEANS ONLY ONE THING TO YOU, JOE WILEY... MONEY! MONEY! FOR FL FOR...

OKAY, DIXON! GRAB A SHOWER AND SEE ME IN MY OFFICE!

YES, SIR!

FOR THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE, JOE WILEY! A FLESH-PEDDLER! AN AGENT FOR VIOLENCE... A SELLER OF YOUTH FOR PUNISHMENT...

WELL, MR WILEY! HOW DID I LOOK? AM I GOOD ENOUGH?

NOT GOOD, DIXON! NOT BAD, EITHER! YOU'LL NEED PLENTY OF TRAINING! PLENTY!

YOU MEAN YOU'LL TAKE ME ON, MR. WILEY?

TRAH... I'LL CHANGE IT, DIXON! ONE THING THOUGH! ONE THING ABOUT THIS FIGHT RACKET! THERE'S NO PLACE IN THE RING FOR A GUY WITH NO BUTS!

I... I GET IT, MR. WILEY!

YOU GOT TO HAVE BUTS TO BE A FIGHTER, DIXON! JUST REMEMBER THAT!

SURE A KID'S GOT TO HAVE BUTS TO BE A FIGHTER, JOE WILEY! ESPECIALLY IF HE WORKS FOR YOU! BECAUSE YOU'RE JUST INTERESTED IN ONE THING! THE BOOK! THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR!

YOU SURE YOUR BOY'S GOOD ENOUGH, WILEY? MURPHY'S A TOUGH NUT?

JUST BOOK THE FIGHT, BAK! MY BOY'LL PUT UP A GOOD SHOW!

YES, HE'S GOT TO HAVE BUTS, JOE WILEY! BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO RUN HIM DOWN, PUT HIM IN WITH BOYS THAT CAN OUTGLASS HIM. FIGHT HIM TWICE A WEEK... SUCH EVERY FINE YOU CAN GET...

MURPHY'S TOM MURPHY? WHY, HE'S A LEADING CONTENDER, MR WILEY!

S'MATTER, DIXON? LOSE YOUR NERVE? YOU WANT TO HIT THE BIG TIME, DON'T YOU?

IT'S *EASY*! ISN'T IT, JOE WILEY? *EVERY* TOP-ROUNDER IN THE BACKET LIKES A *PUSHOVER* ONCE IN A WHILE! IT'S *EASY MONEY* FOR HIM! SO YOU SUPPLY THE *SUCKERS*. EN, JOE! AND IT'S *EASY MONEY* FOR YOU.

AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FOR THE SEMI-FINAL ATTRACTION... IN THIS CORNER, WEIGHING 164 POUNDS... TOM MURPHY! AND IN THIS CORNER... AT 125... *HERBY DIXON!*

REMEMBER, KID! KEEP YOUR LEFT UP!

THEN THE *MURDER* BEGINS. DOESN'T IT, JOE? THE KID IS *RAW*. AND MURPHY IS *AND-WISE*? YES... IT'S *MURDER*! ALL RIGHT. *MURDER* FOR *DIXON*! YOUR *LATEST* BOY...

MURPHY IS REALLY OVERPOWERING THIS NEWCOMER, FOLKS! IT LOOKS LIKE *DIXON* WON'T LAST ANOTHER ROUND.



BETWEEN THE ROUNDS YOU FIX THE KID UP! GLOSE HIS CUTS, SWAB HIS LACERATIONS, TALK TO HIM.

HE'S TOO GOOD FOR... *SAGG*, MR. JOE! YOU... YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE... PUT ME IN... AGAINST HIM.

I'M MATTER! GOT NO *ROTTS*? THINK OF THE *ROD*! THINK OF YOUR *KID* BROTHER!

AND THEN THE *MURDER* BEGINS AGAIN! YOUR BOY IS TAKING *PUNISHMENT*, JOE! PAINFUL PUNISHMENT! BUT DOES IT BOTHER HIM?

YOUR BOY WON'T LAST ANOTHER ROUND, JOE!

WARRA SET? FIFTY SAYS HE DOES ANOTHER.

NO, JOE WILEY! IT'S THE *ODD* THAT BOTHERS YOU! THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE INTERESTED IN! BUT WHEN THOSE PUNCHES ARE GOING TO THE *POOR* KID'S FACE... TO HIS *BRAIN*? NO! IT'S *HOW MUCH* YOU CAN *MAKE*...

HE'S DOWN, FOLKS! *DIXON* IS DOWN!

GET UP, KID! GET UP!



9...10... YOU'RE *OFF*!

FIFTY BUCKS, JOE! PAY OFF!

BLASTED *CRUM-BOOM*!



YOU'RE *BORE*, AREN'T YOU, JOE? YOU LOST FIFTY BUCKS! THE KID COULDN'T TAKE IT! YOU TELL HIM OFF, DON'T YOU!

I SAID YOU'RE *THROTTLED*! *WARRA*! GET YOURSELF A NEW MAN! AGENT! I DON'T HANDLE FELLOW *BEELIES*... *CRUMS* WITH NO *OUTS*!

HE... HE WAS TOO GOOD FOR MR. JOE! I... I NEEDED MORE *EXPERIENCE*!



AND THAT'S THE WAY IT GOES, EH, JOE? ONE AFTER THE OTHER THEY COME AND GO! THE *SHOCKERS*! THE *POORDEVILS*! THE *UNKNOWN*! TRYING TO BREAK THROUGH! SOME OF THEM SHOW PROMISE! SOME DON'T! BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO YOU... DOES IT, JOE WILEY?

I GOT YOU A FIGHT, COLBY! IT'S A GOOD BREAK! NEXT WEEK!

GEE, MR. WILEY! YOU'RE SWEET!



YOU FIGHT ERNIE MAXWELL?

WHY? MAXWELL? BUT HE'S GONNA BE THE NEXT CHAMPION!



S' MATTER, KID? YOU YELLO? GOT NO BUTS?

GEE, MR. WILEY! ERNIE MAXWELL...



AND IF YOU BEAT HIM, KID? THINK WHAT IT WILL MEAN! YOU'LL BE FIGHTIN' IN THE GARDEN, NEXT!

GEE? I NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT!



YOU DO WHAT I TELL YOU, KID? YOU'LL GO FAR! MAXWELL'S A HEADLINER! THE FIGHT PAYS BIG MONEY!

I SURE COULD USE IT, MR. WILEY!



IMPRESSIVE RECORDS LOOK GOOD WHEN A FIGHTER'S NEARING THE TOP RUNG OF THE LADDER TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP, EH, JOE? AND YOU PEOPLE THOSE IMPRESSIVE RECORDS. YOU SUPPLY THOSE "EASY WINS"...

WEIGHING IN? ERNIE MAXWELL! AND IN THIS CORNER, WEIGHING IN, JERRY COLBY...

JUST THE MAN UP, KID! HE'S HOTTER IN THE IN-FIGHTING!



SO THE MURDER BEGINS AGAIN, EH, JOE? MAXWELL... CHAMPIONSHIP MATERIAL. NEEDING WINS. NEEDING TO KEEP HIS NAME BEFORE THE PUBLIC! AND YOUR BOY... COLBY, GREEN. INEXPERIENCED. HARDLY READY! YES, IT'S MURDER, JOE! BUT YOU'RE CASHING IN...

A 6-ROSE SAYS YOUR BOY DOESN'T LAST THREE ROUNDS, JOE!

YOU'RE ON, LOU!



SOMEBODY'S GOT TO LOSE, EH, JOE? THAT'S YOUR ATTITUDE ISN'T IT? SOMEBODY WINS... SOMEBODY LOSES! BUT EVEN IF YOUR BOY IS THE ONE THAT LOSES... *FOR HIM!*

YOU LOOK GOOD, BUT JUST KEEP IN THERE! THIS IS THE THIRD! JUST LAST THIS ONE!

I... BASH... I DON'T... BASH... THINK... I CAN TAKE... ANY MORE... JOE!

A G-NOTE, JOE? IF YOU LOSE IT, YOU'LL COME OUT *BEHIND* THIS TIME...

YOU GOT NO BUTS? JUST STAY ON YOUR FEET ONE MORE ROUND... THAT'S ALL! ONE MORE!

I'LL... SOB... TRY...

YOU *SHAME* HIM INTO IT, DON'T YOU, JOE? YOU CALL HIM NAMES... INSULT HIM... PUSH HIM... THREATEN HIM? AND HE GOES IN THERE... TAKING IT... *FOR YOU!*

HE'S GOIN', FINE! *GOLLY!* THAT'S *IS* *DOING!* BUT THE *A G-NOTE.* *LOU!* NOT YET, WILEY!



THAT'S RIGHT, JOE! YOU HAVEN'T WON YET! *GOLLY'S* GOT TO COME OUT FOR THE FOURTH IN ORDER FOR YOU TO COLLECT! YOU WORK OVER HIM FEVERISHLY.

GOLLY! O' MIND! SHOW 'EM YOU GOT BUTS! ONE MORE ROUND!

MOTHER! SOB... DON'T SPARK ME! SOB... SOB... I'LL BE GOOD!



HE'S *PUNCH* EH, JOE? HE'S UP *QUEEN STREET?* YOU OUGHT TO THROW IN THE *TOWEL!* BUT THAT *G-NOTE!* YOU'LL *LOSE* IT! SO YOU SHOVE HIM OFF THE STOOL AS THE BELL RINGS...

...AND HERE'S THE *FOURTH* FOLLOWS *GOLLY* STAMMERS OUT OF HIS CORNER! HIS EYES ARE *GLASSY*...

GRAY, LOU! YOU'RE HAND IT OVER! *WILEY!* HE ANSWERS THE *FOURTH* HERE!



YOU'RE TOO BUSY STUFFING THE HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILL IN YOUR WALLET, JOE WILEY! YOU DON'T EVEN SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOUR BOY.

MAXWELL LANDS A *GLASSING* RIGHT A *MURDEROUS* LEFT... *ANOTHER* RIGHT... AND *ANOTHER!* *GOLLY'S* OUT ON HIS FEET!



YOU LOOK UP IN TIME TO SEE YOUR BOY GO DOWN.

S...O... YOU'RE OUT!

SOMEBODY GET A DOCTOR! THAT KID'S HURT!



YOU WATCH QUIETLY, JOE WILEY, AS THE DOCTOR KNEELS OVER HIM, SHAKING HIS HEAD.

THIS MAN IS DEAD!



YES, JOE WILEY? JERRY CORRY IS DEAD? YOU KILLED HIM - FOR A LOOSE 5-ROPE? NOW CHEAP AS A MAN'S LIFE TO YOU!

YOU BAST! MR. WILEY!

WELL, DIXON? COME IN!



I HEARD ABOUT GOLF, MR. WILEY! IT'S TOO BAD!

HAH, HE WAS A GRIM! DIDN'T HAVE ANY RUFFS!



YOU'LL NEED A NEW BOY! NOW, MR. WILEY? I... I WAS THINKIN'...

YOU, DIXON? HAH! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH! YOU AIN'T GOT ANY RUFFS, EITHER!



I'VE CHANGED, MR. WILEY! GIVE ME A CHANCE! I'M NOT AFRAID, NOW! GIVE ME A BREAK! MY BROTHER...

DON'T GIVE ME THAT 'BROTHER IN MED SCHOOL' ROUTINE, DIXON! JUST SHOW UP AT THE GYM TOMORROW!



YOU MEAN YOU'LL TAKE ME ON BOARD? SEE! THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION! NOW ABOUT A DRINK, MR. WILEY? I'LL POOR 'EM!

I COULD USE ONE! OKAY! THE BOTTLE'S IN THE CABINET! THERE!



YOU'RE TOO RUSHY TO NOTICE GOLF PUTTING THAT POWDER INTO YOUR DRINK, JOE! YOU'RE TOO RUSHY FIGURING OUT YOUR NEXT MOVE WITH THIS MONEY-MAKER...





The 97 lb. Weakling

Who Became "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man"

"I'll Prove that YOU, too can be a NEW MAN!" — *Charles Atlas*

I KNOW, myself, what it means to have the kind of body that people pity! Of course, you wouldn't know it to look at me now, but I was once a skinny weakling who weighed only 97 lbs.! I was ashamed to strip for sports or undress for a swim. I was such a poor specimen of physical development that I was constantly self-conscious and embarrassed. And I felt only HALF-ALIVE.

Then I discovered "Dynamic Tension." It gave me a body that won for me the title "World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

When I say I can make you over into a man of giant power and energy, I know what I'm talking about. I've seen my new system, "Dynamic Tension," transform hundreds of weak, puny men into Atlas Champions.

Only 15 Minutes a Day

Do you want big, broad shoulders—a fine, powerful chest—biceps like steel—arms and legs rippling with muscular strength—a stomach ridged with bands of sinewy muscle—and a build you can be proud of? Then just give me the opportunity to prove that "Dynamic Tension" is what you need.

No "ifs," and "ands," or "maybes." Just tell me where you want handsome, powerful muscles. Are you fat and flabby? Or skinny and gawky? Are you short-winded, peepless? Do you hold back and let others walk off with the prettiest girls, best jobs, etc? Then write for details about "Dynamic Tension" and learn how I can make you a healthy, confident, powerful HE-MAN.

"Dynamic Tension" is an entirely NATURAL method. Only 15 minutes of your spare time daily is enough to show amazing results—and it's actually fun. "Dynamic Tension" does the work.

Send for FREE BOOK

Mail the coupon right now for full details and I'll send you my illustrated book, "Evolving Health and Strength." Tells all about my "Dynamic Tension" method. Shows actual photos of men I've made into Atlas Champions. It's a valuable book! And it's FREE. Send for your copy today. Mail the coupon to me personally: CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 164T, 115 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y.



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I want the proof that your system of "Dynamic Tension" will help make a New Man of me — give me a healthy, husky body and leg muscular development. Send me your free book, "Evolving Health and Strength."

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JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION

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TRADITION!



BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE JOLTING
CONCLUSION TO THIS GRIPPING TALE!

WELL-TRAVELED!



HORACE WAS SHORT AND THIN... THE TYPICAL "CARPENTER WILDAWFOAST" TYPE! HIS CLOTHES WERE HATHEN CHASBY AND, AS I GLANCED ON BEYOND HIM, I NOTICED THAT HIS HOUSE WAS SUITE RUN-DOWN TOO...

YOU, YOU HAVE ANY HOUSES, MR. HORACE? I PLAY A LITTLE GOLF, BUT FOR SET THE MR. BAILEY STUFF! I CALL ME JACK'S.



HORACE SMILED SHEEPISHLY! HE BEGGED TO ME...

COMON OVER, JACK! I'LL SHOW YOU MY HOBBY! IT'S DOWN IN THE CELLAR!

SURE, HORACE!



I HOPPED THE LOW BRUSH-FENCE THAT DIVIDED HORACE'S PROPERTY FROM MINE AND FOLLOWED HORACE INTO HIS PARTY-FACE'S HOME...

WE HAVEN'T ANY CHILDREN, IS BESS BESS AND ME, BUT I LIKE PUTTERING WITH 'EM ANYWAY!

WTF?



HORACE LED ME THROUGH AN UNFISH KITCHEN TO THE CELLAR ROOM! I NOTICED THAT THE DINN WAS LADEN WITH UNWASHED DISHES...



WE DESCENDED INTO THE DARKNESS OF HORACE'S CELLAR! HE FLIPPED A LIGHT SWITCH AND ITS CHEERY GLOW CHASD THE ROOM...



THERE, IN ONE CORNER OF THE CELLAR, UNDER THE GLARING OVER-HEAD LIGHTS, WAS A LONG TABLE! AND UPON IT, IN DELICATE MIN-UTURE, WAS THE MOST ATTRACTIVE MODEL RAILROAD LAYOUT I'D EVER SEEN.



SUDDENLY I NOTICED HORACE'S FACE GROW DARK! HE SHOOK HIS HEAD...

OF COURSE, IT ISN'T HARDLY COMPLETED! I-I DON'T HAVE ANY ROLLING-STOCK YET!

THAT'S RIGHT! I DIDN'T NOTICE!



IT WAS TRUE! THE TRACKS OF THE LAYOUT WERE SPREAD IN AN INTRICATE PATTERN OVER THE WHOLE TABLE! THEY WOUND AROUND A TINY UNFINISHED TOWN, OVER A GLASS RIVER, ALONGSIDE A GREY-GRAVEL ROAD, AND ON INTO A PAPER-MACHE MOUNTAIN THROUGH A BLACK TUNNEL! BUT THERE WERE NO CARS TO BE SEEN ON ANY PART OF THE LAYOUT. . .

I... I CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY 'EM, RIGHT NOW!

WELL THAT'S TOO BAD, HORACE!



HORACE RAN A PALE FINGER OVER THE BRICK-SANDWICH BRASS...

I... I TRY SAVING FOR 'EM! I KNOW JUST WHAT I WANT! THERE'S A BEAUTY OF AN ENGINE IN THE HOBBY SHOP IN TOWN! CHEAP, TOO!

TRY SAYING, HORACE? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



HORACE STRAIGHTENED SOME LUSH-MOSS SHRUBBERY ON THE ROLLING PAPER-MACHE MOUNTAIN.

EVERY TIME I GET ENOUGH TO BUY THE ENGINE AND TENDER AND MAYBE A FEW FREIGHT CARS... BESSIE GOES TRAVELING!

OH?



I GLANCED AWAY FROM HORACE, DOWN AT THE LITTLE SALSA WOOD STONES THAT LINED THE SIDEWALKS OF THE MODEL TOWN! I DIDN'T WANT HIM TO KNOW THAT I SAW HIS EYES FILLING WITH TEARS...

BESSIE LIKES TRAVELING! SHE LIKES TO VISIT PLACES! MAYBE IF WE HAD SOME CARS... WE'D STAY HOME! BUT... WELL... WE CAN'T DO SHE DOES...

I... I'M SORRY, HORACE! I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL! I'VE GOT A JOY OF MY OWN...



HORACE'S FACE BRIGHTENED...

YOU HAVE? OR... YOU'LL BRING HIM DOWN TO SEE THE LAYOUT, JACK? HE'D LOVE IT!

SURE, HORACE! YOU BET!



HORACE LEANED OVER AND STRAIGHTENED A TILTING TELEGRAPH POLE...

MADE THE WHOLE THING OUT OF SCRAP LUMBER! EVEN THE TRACKS ARE HOME-MADE!

THAT'S GOOD!



YES! BOUGHT THE RAILS OUT OF LUNCH-MONEY! I SAVED! CUT THE TIES... PAINTED 'EM... AND NAILLED THE RAILS ON!

THAT'S CLEVER, HORACE! THEY LOOK VERY REALISTIC!



THAT SATURDAY, I TOOK MY SON OVER TO THE
WHERMES' HOUSE TO SEE HORACE'S RAILROAD! A
WOMAN OPENED THE DOOR FOR US...



MRS. WHERMES ORDERED...



NATURALLY, PHILIP WAS
DELIGHTED WITH HORACE'S MODEL
LAYOUT! HE WHISLED AND POINTED...



LOOK, DADDY!
A FACTORY...
WITH A SMOKE
STACK!

HEH! YEP!
THAT'S MODELED
AFTER THE SHOP
I WORK IN,
PHIL!

BESS WHERMES WAS A HEAVY WOMAN WITH A GRIM
FACE! I GUESS I TOOK AN IMMEDIATE DISLIKE TO
HER! IT WASN'T FAIR... I KNOW. BUT I SUDDENLY FELT
VERY SORRY FOR HORACE...



OH, YES! ST. PETERSBURG!
LOVELY PLACE! AND THE
TRAIN-TRIP DOWN WAS
SO DELIGHTFUL.

IS, ER... HORACE
IN MRS. WHERMES'?

THEY CHUCKLED AND CHATTERED...
PHILIP AND HORACE! I HARDLY
HEARD THEM! I KEPT LISTENING
TO MRS. WHERMES'S HEAVY FOOT-
STEPS, STAMPING AROUND ABOVE...



SEE, MR. WHERMES! IT'S
SUPERB! BUT WHERE'S
THE TRAINS?

DON'T GET
SOPHISTICATED! I'M TELLING
YOU, I WILL
THOUGHT! AND
THEN YOU AND
ME CAN GOO! 'EM
TOGETHER!

I LOOKED AT HORACE! HE WAS STARRING DOWN AT
THE WATER-TOWER HE'D MADE OUT OF AN OLD COFFEE
CAN!



SEE, MR. WHERMES!
I CAN'T WAIT!

NEITHER CAN I,
PHILLY! IT'LL BE
SOON! SOON AS I
CAN SCRAPE TOGETHER
A FEW DOLLARS.

O'MON,
PHIL!
LUNCH
MUST BE
READY!

WE WENT UP... OUT OF THE CELLAR! MRS. WHERMES
SAW US TO THE DOOR! I HAD TO MAKE A NEIGHBORLY
OFFER...



YOU MUST COME IN SOMETIME,
MRS. WHERMES, AND TELL MY
WIFE AND ME ALL ABOUT
YOUR TRAVELS!

I WILL, MR. BAILEY!
I'D LOVE TO! OH,
I'VE BEEN TO SUCH
INTERESTING PLACES!

2

I HEARD ABOUT THEM! FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS I GOT MY FILL OF THE INTERESTING PLACES BESS WHEENS HAD VISITED! EVERY NIGHT SHE'D COME OVER... AND...

THE GRAND CANYON? "EMMMA? OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SPOT! SAW IT TWO YEARS AGO..."

ONE FRIDAY, ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER WE'D MOVED IN, HORACE CONFIDED IN ME...

LOOKS LIKE I'LL BE ABLE TO GET THAT PRESENT TRAIN, JACK! I'VE SAVED UP THE MONEY! GOIN' DOWN TOMORROW...

BREATHE, HORACE! PAUL WILL BE THRILLED!

THAT NIGHT, I COULDN'T SLEEP! KEPT HEARING VOICES DRIFTING ACROSS THE STILL NIGHT AIR FROM THE WHEENS' HOUSE! THEY SEEMED *FICHTED*... *AMMY*...

SOUNDS LIKE BESS AND HORACE ARE *ARGUING*!



THE NEXT DAY WAS SATURDAY! I DROPPED BY HORACE'S HOUSE WITH PAUL TO SEE THE NEW TRAINS RUN ON THAT BEAUTIFUL LAYOUT! NO ONE ANSWERED THE DOOR! WE WENT IN! HORACE SAT BY THE HOOK TABLE, PUTTING ON WITH SOME ARTIFICIAL TEETH...

HELLO, HORACE!

HO, MR. WHEENS! WE CAME TO SEE THE TRAINS!

DIDN'T GET 'EM!



HORACE LOOKED LIKE HE'D WENT ALL NIGHT! HIS EYES WERE RED! I HAD TO ASK THAT INEVITABLE QUESTION...

WHERE'S BESS, HORACE?

WHY... FRANKLIN AGAIN!



THAT WAS IT... THE WHOLE DEAL! BESS HAD COME OFF ON ANOTHER OF HER JAUNTS! SHE'D TAKEN THE MONEY HORACE HAD PINCHED AND SAVED... THE MONEY HE'D HOPE TO BUY THAT ENGINE AND FREIGHT TRAIN WITH...

I... I'M SORRY, HORACE!

FOUR YEARS I BEEN WAITIN'! FOUR WHOLE YEARS I BEEN SAVIN'!



THAT LONG, HORACE? I DIDN'T KNOW.

FOUR YEARS! EVERY TIME I SCRAPE ENOUGH MONEY TOGETHER TO BUY SOME ROLLING STOCK, OFF SHE GOES... TRAVELING AGAIN!



IT WAS HEARTBREAKING! THE POOR GUY HAD BUILT THAT BEAUTIFUL LAYOUT... AND HE'S NEVER BEEN ABLE TO AFFORD TO BUY THE TRAINS TO RUN AROUND ON IT...

IT'S LIKE A **BRACESTRAP** A LAY-OUT! AM'T HE GOOD WITHOUT TRAINS? BOOM! AROUND ON IT! IT'S DEAD WITHOUT 'EM!

YOU'LL GET 'EM, HORACE! JUST WAIT AND SEE!



HE TURNED TO ME, HE FLEW WIDE, HIS FACE PALE.

YOU'LL HELP ME JACK? YOU'LL HOLD MY MONEY FOR ME? WE WON'T TELL MISS TRACY TIME! WE'LL GET 'EM BEFORE SHE CAN SPEND IT... TRAVELING!

ALL RIGHT, HORACE! I'LL HELP YOU! I'LL BE GLAD TO!



AND SO, I BECAME A PART OF HORACE'S DECEPTION! EVERY WEEK, HE'D GIVE ME A FEW DOLLARS... WHAT-EVER HE'LL SAVED, TO HOLD FOR HIM...

HORACE! JUST A MINUTE, BETTER?

HERE, HORACE! HOW MUCH IS THAT?

ALMOST FIFTY, HORACE! FOUR DOLLARS?



"MAYBE AFTER TWO MONTHS, WE'LL SOTTER THE MONEY TOGETHER..."

THAT'S *IT*, HORACE! YOU CAN BUY THEM NOW! YOU'VE SAVED THE FIFTY DOLLARS!

SH-H-H! SHE'LL HEAR YOU! TOMORROW MORNING, WE'LL ALL GO DOWN TO THE HOBBY SHOP... YOURS, AND PHILLY... AND BUY 'EM!



BUT THAT EVENING... I HAD A VICTOR, MISS WHEDDS...

WHAT?

I SAID GIVE ME MY HUSBAND'S MONEY, MR. BAILEY!



DOES HE, I MEAN... IS IT OKAY WITH HIM...?

I THINK YOU'D BEST MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS! IT'S NO CONCERN OF MINE! THE MONEY, PLEASE...



YOU, YOU'LL LET HIM BUY THE TRAINS, MRS. WHEDDS? YOU WON'T SPEND IT ON SOMETHING ELSE?

I HAVE A RESERVATION, MR. BAILEY! A LOWER BERTH... TOMORROW MORNING.



I COULDN'T HELP IT! I HAD TO SPURT OFF. I WAS THAT MAD... YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TRAVEL IN! AGAIN, MRS. WHEEMS? BUT HONAGE HAS WAITED SO LONG FOR THOSE TRAINS OF HIS...



I GAVE HER THE MONEY! I COULDN'T HELP IT! IT WASN'T MINE...

HERE, MRS. WHEEMS! I... I HOPE YOU HAVE A PLEASANT JOURNEY?

YOU WOULDN'T BE SARGANT, MR. BAILEY? GOOD EVENING!



HONAGE CAME OVER A LITTLE WHILE LATER! HE WAS BREATHLESS...

SHE'S PACKING HER BAG? WHAT'S UP, JACK?



NO! YOU DIDN'T GIVE IT TO HER!



I HAD TO, HONAGE! SHE KNEW ALL ABOUT IT! SHE DEMANDED IT!



HE DARTED OUT OF THE HOUSE! I THINK I HEARD HIM COBBING AS HE CROSSED OUR SHED-FENCE...

HONAGE? WAIT? I...



I WANTED TO MAKE IT UP TO HONAGE! THAT NIGHT, I HEARD THEM ARGUING AGAIN! AND I DECIDED...

POOR BUI! HE'LL BE BROKEN-HEARTED! TOMORROW, I'M GOING TO BUY HIM THOSE WHISTLE TRAINS.



I FELT GOOD AFTER THAT! I LISTENED TO THE HIGH PITCHED VOICES ACROSS THE WAY, AND SMILED! TO MAKE HONAGE HAPPY AFTER ALL! I WENT TO FELL ASLEEP! THE NEXT THING I HEARD...

HEY! IT'S ELEVEN O'CLOCK ALREADY! AND I WANTED TO TAKE HONAGE DOWN TO THE HOBST SHOP FIRST THING THIS MORNING!



PAUL AND I WENT OVER TO THE WHEEMS HOUSE
WENT AFTER OUR BUNCH? IT WAS ABOUT NOON?
AS WE CAME IN THE DOOR...



LISTEN, GABBY?

WELL, I'LL
BE...

WE COULD HEAR IT CLEARLY, MY SON AND I? THE
GASSETY-CLACK OF TINY WHEELS RUSHING AROUND
ON THE TRACKS DOWN THERE... IN THE CELLAR? WE
DIDN'T BELIEVE IT? SUDDENLY THE WHINING WAIL OF
A LOCOMOTIVE WHISTLE SCORCHED THROUGH THE
HOUSE



HE'S NOT THEM, GABBY! MR.
WHEEMS HAS
NO TRAINS!

C'MON,
SON!

WE RUSHED DOWNSTAIRS? HORACE SAT AT THE TRAIN-
FORMER CONTROLS, SPINNING? THE TINY ENGINE SPED
BOISILY OVER THE SLEAMING RAILS, RUSHING IN AND OUT
OF THE TUNNEL, PUFFING SMOKE, GRASSING ITS LINE OF
PRESENT CARS BEHIND IT...



MR. WHEEMS? MR. WHEEMS?
YOU GOT 'EM?
YOU GOT 'EM?

YEP, PULLY?
I GOT 'EM!

I GLANCED AT HORACE WHEEMS AND SHIVERED!
HIS EYES WERE GLAZED... WILD-LOOKING! A
LITTLE DROPLET OF SPITTLE DROD OUT OF
HIS MOUTH. I HAD TO ASK...



HORACE WHEEMS'S...
BESS?

SHE'S
TRAVELLING!
SHE LOVES TO
TRAVEL!

I LOOKED DOWN... AND THE BLOOD FROZE IN MY VEINS! THE TRACKS THROUGHOUT THE LAYOUT WERE
STAINED RED! WHEN THE SPEEDING ENGINE WITH ITS LINE OF PRESENT CARS WHIZZED BY ME, I BARNED! A
BOX-CAR DOOR WAS OPEN! A STAINING EYEBALL BAZED OUT AT ME! THERE WERE OTHER BOX-CARS... EACH
STUFFED WITH ITS BOMB-CARGO! THE OPEN HOPPER CARS CARRIED SEVERED FINGERS... FORGET THE TRAIN
CARS WERE FILLED WITH BLOOD! HORACE GIGGLED.



NOW BESS'S SON MY RAILROAD! SHE,
EN, EN, JOVES TO... EN, EN, TRAVEL!

YOU'LL BE JARRED BY THE STARTLING CLIMAX
OF THIS SHOCKING NARRATIVE!

I H A T E !

AT THE CURB, THE BIG RED MOVING-VAN STANDS QUIETLY—ITS REAR DOORS Gaping OPEN LIKE THE MOUTH OF SOME MEDIOCRAL MONSTER! EVEN NOW, THE HURRY MOVERS ARE PULLING ARTICLES OF FURNITURE FROM WITHIN IT—LIVING THE SIDEWALK BEFORE THE GIANT WHITE HOUSE! ON THE PORCH, A MAN AND A WOMAN STAND SILENTLY, STARRING AT THE YELLOW SCRAP OF PAPER TACKED UPON THE SPOTLESS DOOR.

YOUR NAME IS JOHN SMITH? YOU'RE AN AMERICAN? WITH A GOOD AMERICAN NAME? YOU'RE A CHURCHGOER? A FAMILY MAN? A RESPECTED MEMBER OF YOUR COMMUNITY? YOU'RE WATCHING THIS COUPLE WANDER THE STREET HEAD THE NOTE YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS HAVE TACKLED THEM!

A SHOCK SUSPENSORY



WHAT, WHAT DOES IT
SAY, DAVE?

IT, IT SAYS "DON'T MOVE IN, JEW
YOU'LL BE SHOT!" WE DON'T
WANT JEWS IN THIS NEIGHBOR-
HOOD!"



THEY SEE IT, ED?
THEY'RE READ-
ING IT!

MAYBE THEY'LL TAKE
THE NOTE, ED, JOHN?

LOOK?
THEY'RE
GOING
INSIDE!"

YES, JOHN SMITH! THEY'RE GOING INSIDE! PERHAPS THERE'S NO PLACE LEFT FOR THEM TO GO! YOU HATE THEM, DON'T YOU JOHN? YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS HATE JEWS...



THEY'RE BRINGING
IN THE FURNITURE,
ED!

DIDN'T I TELL YOU THEY'RE
ASKING FOR IT? NOW
THEY'RE GOING TO GET IT!

IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT THEIR PARENTS AND THEIR PARENTS' PARENTS WERE BORN HERE, DOES IT, JOHN? THEY'RE JEWS! THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS! YOU THINK THEY'RE DIFFERENT... AND YOU DON'T WANT THEM AROUND...



SO NOW THEY'RE MOVED IN, JOHN! THE THREATS DON'T CHANGE THEIR MINDS! THE PHONE CALLS... THE LETTERS... THE BRIDE REMARKS YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS MADE! THEY DIDN'T SEEM TO MATTER TO THEM! PERHAPS THEY'RE USED TO THAT SORT OF THING... JOHN...



WHEN DID YOU FIRST LEARN TO HATE, JOHN? DID YOUR MOTHER TEACH IT TO YOU? DID YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIENDS WISE YOU UP? DID YOU LEARN IT FROM YOUR WIFE. YOUR DAUGHTER DID SO, YOUR NEIGHBOR, TIP YOU OFF WHEN, JOHN? WHEN DID YOU BECOME INFECTED WITH THE PIREBARK CALLED HATE?...



DID YOUR FATHER... A SMALL TOWN DOCTOR... TELL YOU THAT, JOHN? DID HE LIST THE SENSIBLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOU AND THEM? DID HE TELL YOU THEIR BLOOD WAS DIFFERENT... THEIR MINDS... THEIR HEARTS? HE WAS A DOCTOR, JOHN! HE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN...



HE TAKES THE SAME TRAIN YOU DO, DOESN'T HE, JOHN? HE WEARS THE SAME KIND OF CLOTHES... EATS THE SAME KIND OF FOOD... SMOKE THE SAME BRAND OF CIGARETTES... ROOTS FOR THE SAME BASEBALL TEAM! BUT HE'S A JEW! SO YOU AND ED AND THE OTHERS WAIT FOR HIM ONE NIGHT...



WHY NOT? WE TRIED TO WARN 'EM FIRST! WE PHONED 'EM! WE WROTE 'EM LETTERS! MAYBE IF WE BEAT 'EM UP THEY'LL BELL AND MOVE! OTHERWISE, MORE'LL START COMING IN!



SO TELLING WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO OUR REAL-ESTATE VALUES IF THAT HAPPENS! MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, ED!



AND SUDDENLY YOU'RE UPON HIM... BEATING... KICKING... SWEARING...



AND YOU'RE A LITTLE SICK THAT NIGHT WHEN YOU GET HOME, AREN'T YOU, JOHN? THERE'S BLOOD-STAINS ON YOUR SHIRT... BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS? YOU AND THE OTHERS DID A GOOD JOB, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU DON'T SEE MUCH OF HIM AFTER THAT NIGHT, DO YOU, JOHN? HE TAKES A DIFFERENT TRAIN, NOW? HE CHOOSES THE STREET TO AVOID YOU? BUT HE *DOESN'T* MOVE, DOES HE?...



THE PLANS ARE MADE? THE HATE FESTERS? YOU DON'T EVEN HEAR YOUR WIFE MARY'S VOICES? YOU'RE TOO ENROUSED IN WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR DAVE AND ETHEL WOLF...

AND THEN YOU'RE OUT THERE, JOHN... UNDER THE BLACK STAR-STUDED SKY, WITH THE BOYS' WHISPERS...



THE LIGHTED MATCHES GO ON THE GASOLINE-SCORCH
SHINGLES, DRUPTS INTO AN CHARGE SLOW! YOU WATCH
AS THE MURDER FLAMES LEAP UP THE SIDES OF THE
QUAINT WHITE HOUSE...



THEY'RE UP THERE ON THE SECOND FLOOR... SCREAMING
HYSTERICALLY! THE FIERY LIGHT OF THE CONSUMING
FLAMES SILHOUETTES THEM...



AND THEN THE CONFUSION AS THE
FIRE ENGINES ARRIVE! THE WAIL-
ING OF THE AMBULANCE SIREN...



THE PANIC, AS THE NEIGHBORHOOD
POURED OUT OF ITS HOUSES...



SOON THE HOUSE IS A ROARING INFERNO! YOU'VE
GASPED, JOHN! WHY DON'T THEY COME OUT? THE WHOLE
BOTTOM FLOOR IS A MASS OF FLAME! SUDDENLY...



THE WOMAN LEAPS FIRST... HER BODY LIMPLIKE A
RAG DOLL! SHE HITS THE GROUND WITH A DULL
THUD! THE WAR FOLLOWS, HOWLING LIKE A HUNT
DOG...



AND THE RELIEF WHEN THE FLAMES
OF RAGE ARE BROUGHT UNDER CON-
TROL... TEMPORARY RELIEF, FOR THE
AMBULANCE DOCTOR ANNOUNCES...



WERE THEY DIFFERENT FROM YOU, JOHN SMITH? DO THEY HAVE TO GO? BECAUSE OF IT? SO BACK TO YOUR HOME, JOHN! STAND AND WATCH FROM YOUR WINDOW AS THE LAST WHISP OF SMOKE FACES AWAY FROM THE BLACKENED SKELETON OF THEIR HOME LOVELY HOME.



MAY, JOHN? WHY DID THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN?

DON'T GO **SOFT**, MARY! THEY WERE **JEW**? WE DON'T WANT **JEW**? THEY'RE NO GOOD!



JOHN? JOHN? IS THAT MY SON TALKING?

MOTHER? SMITH?



MAY? WE DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN!

NO! BUT I HEARD I HEARD IT ALL! I'M... I'M ADVANCED OF YOU, JOHN!



MAY, JOHN? THEY'RE STARTIN' TO SNORR AROUND! THEY'RE... OH

DID HE HELP YOU? DID HE HELP YOU KILL THEM?



PLEASE, MAY! ER! THIS IS MY MOTHER!



I'M NOT YOUR MOTHER! NOT YOUR REAL MOTHER!

MAY! ER! MY NEIGHBOR! PLEASE!

I... I BETTER GO, JOHN!



NO! STAY! LISTEN! MY HUSBAND WAS A DOCTOR! ONE NIGHT THEY SENT FOR HIM! THERE'D BEEN AN ACCIDENT! A MAN KILLED! HIS PREGNANT WIFE INJURED! MY HUSBAND DELIVERED THE BABY BEFORE SHE DIED!



ARE YOU LISTENING, JOHN? ARE YOU?

WE TOOK THAT BABY JOE! WE BROUGHT HIM UP AS OUR OWN... AND SO, IN OUR OWN FAITH...

WAIT YOU MEAN...

I NEVER INTENDED TO TELL YOU, JOHN! I HAVEN HAD TO! FEEL YOU'RE ADOPTED!

MA!

YOUR PARENTS... YOUR REAL PARENTS... WERE JEWISH!

ARE YOU DIFFERENT, JOHN? ARE YOU DIFFERENT NOW? DO YOU FEEL ANY DIFFERENT? DO YOU LOOK ANY DIFFERENT? ARE YOU THE SAME? MAH YOU WERE TEN MINUTES AGO... WATCHING THAT LAST WHISP OF SMOKE FADE AWAY...

OH LORD! OH LORD! WHAT... WHAT HAVE I DONE? SOB... SOB... WHAT HAVE I DONE...

COUSIN? WELL... I'LL BE SOME...

WHAT NOW, JOHN? WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW, NOW THAT YOU'VE FOUND OUT...

HOW STUPID I'VE BEEN! HOW STUPID! STUPID!

COME TO BED, JOHN!

NOW LOOK UP, JOHN! LOOK AT ED! LOOK HOW HE'S STARING AT YOU! DO YOU SEE IT, JOHN? DO YOU SEE THE HATE... THERE... IN HIS EYES...

ED! WAIT! ED!

LET HIM GO, JOHN! LET HIM GO!

CAN YOU SLEEP, JOHN? CAN YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES AND NOT SEE THOSE SILHOUETTES AGAINST THE FIERY FLAMES... THOSE SCREAMING PRISONERS... FALLING... LIKE RAB COLLET...

OH LORD! LORD! FORGIVE ME!

AND HOW DO YOU LIKE IT, JOHN, WHEN THE BOYS TURN AWAY WHEN YOU SIT NEXT TO THEM ON THE TRAIN...



ED? FOR PETE'S SAKE! WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER TEN YEARS!

OH WHEN THEY CROSS THE STREETS TO AVOID YOU...

CHARLIE! IT'S JOHN? THE SAME JOHN? IS THERE ANYTHING DIFFERENT ABOUT ME?



HOW ABOUT THE TIME YOUR SON COMES HOME FROM SCHOOL... BANGS... "TORN... OUT... BRUISED..."



THEY CALLED ME... SON... THEY CALLED ME A JEW-BOY!

YOU'RE JOHN SMITH? YOU'RE AN AMERICAN, JOHN? NOW CAN THEY DO THIS TO YOU NOW?



WHAT DOES IT SAY, JOHN?

IT... IT SAYS, "MOVE... JEW! WE DON'T WANT JEWS IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD!"

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE, JOHN? WHAT MADE YOU HATE THEM? WHY DO THEY HATE YOU NOW?



CAN'T YOU SEE? CAN'T YOU SEE HOW WRONG WE ARE... HOW WRONG WE'VE BEEN?

GODAM, JEW!

HATE IS BORN, JOHN! HATE IS IMPRESSED! WHERE DO WE LEARN IT? WHO REACHES IT TO US? NOW CAN IT BE CONTAINED? LOOK, JOHN! THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOU... THERE... IN THAT DARK PLACE...



MAYBE YOU'LL GET THE IDEA, JEW!

WE DON'T WANT YOU HERE!

MORE, BLAST YOU!

THE BEATING IS PAINFUL, BUT IT JOHN! IS IT YOUR PUNISHMENT? MUST PAIN BE THE ONLY TEACHING? CAN'T WE LEARN WITHOUT PAIN? CAN'T WE LEARN TO LOVE... INSTEAD OF TO HATE? NOW WE'RE LEARNING NOW, AREN'T YOU? THE KICKING... THE BEATING... IT'S TEACHING YOU!



BUT THE OTHERS? WHEN WILL THEY LEARN?

THE END

HERE IS A SCIENCE-FICTION YARN WITH SHEER,
STARK TERROR IN ITS ELECTRIFYING FINISH!

WHAT FUR?!



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY

THE AERO-CAR DROPPED WHILE ON THE BUILDING
ROOF, AND HE TOOK THE HYDROLIFT DOWN TO THE
SIXTY-NINTH LEVEL. A TALL MAN OPENED THE SOLAR-
APARTMENT DOOR...



YES? WHAT IS IT?

I AM EARLE LE DOUE,
THE FURRIER'S I HAVE MR.
LIMFORT'S BEAR? YOU
ARE... CAPTAIN LIMFORT?

CAPTAIN LIMFORT STEPPED ASIDE AND WHILE
ENTERED THE LAVISHLY FURNISHED TWENTY-SECOND
CENTURY SOLAR-FLAT...



WHAT? IT'S MR. LE DOUE?
HE'S GOT YOUR FUR PRICE?

I'LL BE RIGHT
THERE, GEORGE!

EMILE OPENED THE BOX HE'D BEEN CARRYING AND LIFTED OUT THE EXPENSIVE SCARF...

YOUR WIFE HAS EXCELLENT TASTE, CAPT. LIMFORT! THESE ARE BEAUFINE DRUNKS! HOT DRUNK-DIED DRUNKS! DISGUSTING! A SKUNK SKIN IS WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD THESE DAYS!



THIS FOR SCARF!! THE WHOLE IDEA... FUR COATS... FUR SCARFS... STOLAS... CAPES! IT'S INSULTING! YOU TRAP SOME HELPLESS ANIMAL... SKIN IT... AND DRAPE IT AROUND A WOMAN'S NECK...



OH, MR. LE DOUX! IT'S BEAUTIFUL! AN' MRS. LIMFORT... HMMM!



DO YOU LOVE IT, MR. LE DOUX? VERY NICE! VERY NICE! VERY BECOMING!



MY HUSBAND IS AGAINST FUR PIECES OR MORAL SCOUNDRELS, MR. LE DOUX! DON'T WIND HIM! HOW MUCH IS IT? FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS! WHAT?



BEWARE! DON'T SHOUT! THIS IS A BEAUFINE DRUNK SCARF! DRUNKS ARE PRACTICALLY EATING! IT'S WORTH EVERY CENT! EXTINCT! DRUNKS! WHERE? VERDUNIA IN GRAWLING WITH DRUNKS!



VERDUNIA! IT'S A LITTLE PLANET IN SOLAR SYSTEM E-401! I MADE AN EMERGENCY LANDING THERE ONCE! IT'S NEVER BEEN EXPLORED! I SWEAR I'M THE ONLY HUMAN THAT EVER SET FOOT ON IT! I NAMED IT!





CAPTAIN LIMPORT'S ROCKET-SHIP LEFT EARTH TWO DAYS LATER, BOUND FOR VERDUNIA...



TEN DAYS LATER...

ATTENTION ALL PASSENGERS! ATTENTION! PREPARE FOR LANDING! APPROACHING DESTINATION... VERDUNIA!



AND THEN THE SHIP WAS DOWN...

ALL RIGHT, LE DOUX? SINCE YOU CAN EITHER OPERATE FROM THE SHIP OR MAKE DUMP WHERE YOU SEE FIT?

DISAPPROVE OF WHAT WE ARE HERE FOR, CAPTAIN, WE'LL MAKE OUR OWN CAMP!



EMILE LE DOUX AND HIS ASSOCIATES SET OFF ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS...

LOOK, EMILE! LIMPORT WAS RIGHT! A STUMP!

GENTLEMEN! WE ARE RICH!



THE BRIND-TRAPPING BEGAN IN SERIOUS...

HOW MANY IS THAT, EMILE?

SEVENTY-FIVE TODAY, HENRI! WE ARE DOING WELL!



BUT THE NEXT DAY, CAPTAIN LIMPORT LOOKED OUT OF HIS ROCKET-SHIP PORT AND SAW A BARRED FIRE-INGE COMING ACROSS THE OCEANING...

LE DOUX? WHAT HAPPENED?

QUICKLY! LET ME COME ABOARD! IT WAS HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE!



EMILE LE DOUX WAS OUT AND BRUISED HE CASPED OUT HIS STORY...

IT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT! THOSE THINGS... THOSE HORRIBLE THINGS... INVADED OUR CAMP!

COMPOSE YOURSELF, LE DOUX! TELL ME EVERYTHING!



"WE'D PITCHED CAMP ABOUT FIVE MILES FROM THE SHIP! WE'D HAD A GOOD DAY'S TRAPPING... ALMOST SEVENTY-FIVE BELTS! SUDDENLY, THE GROUND BEGAN TO SHAKE..."



"THEY STORMED DOWN UPON US! I MANAGED TO HIDE BEHIND AN OVERHANGING ROCK, AND SO WASN'T SEEN! THE LOATHSOME THINGS CAPTURED THE OTHERS..."



"THEY WERE HERE... KIDNAP! HARRY ALIEN MONSTERS!"



"AND RIGHT THERE BEFORE MY EYES... MURDERED THEM!"



"IT WAS THE BLOODIEST SIGHT I'VE EVER SEEN! CAPTAIN, I... I'M BACK!"

"ARE YOU SURE THEY'RE DEAD... ALL OF THEM? THE OTHERS..."



"ABSOLUTELY! LET'S LEAVE THIS CURSED PLACE!"

"PREPARE FOR TAKE-OFF! PREPARE FOR TAKE-OFF!"



"SUDDENLY THE SHIP SHOOK..."

"WHAT'S THAT?"

"SOMETHING'S COMING!"



CAPTAIN LIMFORT DARTED TO THE PORT.

HOLF SMORE!
LE DOOM!
DOOM
DOOMLY!

IT... IT...
IT'S THEM!

I LOOK AROUND
THEIR NEEDS!

WOOD
LOOM!

WHAT IN BLAZES!
ARE YOU SHOOKED
ABOUT, LE DOOM?

BUT THAT...
THAT'S
DIFFERENT!

CAPTAIN LIMFORT SLAMMED THE PORT SHUT! THE ROCKET TURNED BEGAN TO FIRE! THE SHIP BEGAN TO RISE! THE BARTY WONDERS HESITATED... WATCHING IT! AROUND THEIR NEEDS, THE DEAR-WHITE HUMAN SKINS HUNG LIMPLY... THE ARTIFICIAL EYES STANING...

IS IT DIFFERENT, LE DOOM?
THESE FURRY CREATURES WEAR
HUMAN FELTS! WE HUMANS
WEAR FUR! SO IT DIFFERENT!
IS IT?



THE IMPACT OF THE HORRIFYING WIND-UP TO
THIS STORY WILL CURDLE YOUR BLOOD!

COLD CUTS!

YOUR NAME IS **VICTOR JENSEN**! FOR OVER A MONTH YOU'VE PLANNED TO **MURDER REYER**. ...YOUR WIFE! FOR OVER A MONTH, YOU'VE **THOUGHT ABOUT IT**... **WORKED IT OUT OVER AND OVER** IN YOUR MIND! AND **NOW** YOU'VE **DONE IT**! REYER'S CRUMPLED BODY LIES ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR IN AN EVER-WIDENING POOL OF BLOOD! YOU STARE DOWN AT IT...

I'VE **WASHED YOU...** AND OF YOU FOR **BLOOD**! TONIGHT, WHEN IT'S DARK, I'LL **BASH THE CAR AROUND TO THE DELIVERY ENTRANCE**, AND...

**A HORROR
SUSPENSE STORY**



SUDDENLY, YOUR BLOOD FREEZES IN YOUR VEINS! THE TELEPHONE BEGINS TO **RING**! ITS BINTANG JANGLE ECHOES THROUGH THE APARTMENT...



NONPAREIL WHO IN SLACKS CAN THAT BE?

YOU PICK UP THE PHONE! THE VOICE ON THE OTHER END IS **PAUSE**...

HELLO, **REYER**? THEY'RE **HERE**! THOSE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO **SOBBET** YOUR APARTMENT **WHILE YOU'RE AWAY**...

THIS ISN'T **REYER**, CHARLIE! IT'S **PIG**! **REYER** - ER, **REYER'S** **WIFE** IS **UPSTATE** **ALREADY**...



OH! HELLO, VIC? I
THOUGHT YOU TWO
WERE LEAVING
TOGETHER...
FOR A ROW
MORNING,
EARLY!

HELEN DECIDED
TO GO ON
AHEAD TO
OPEN THE
PLACE! I'M
FOLLOWING
IN THE CAR!

WELL, I'LL BE
RIGHT OVER,
VIC! GOT THREE
PEOPLE WHO
ARE INTERESTED
IN YOUR PLACE!
THEY CAME TO
SEE IT!

NOT NOW,
CHARLIE! NOW
ABOUT LATER
ON FOREVVV!

YOU DRAFT, VIC?
THEY CAME IN
SPECIAL TO SEE
IT... THIS AFTER-
NOON? I CAN'T
STAY! 'EM OFF!
WHAT'S PROBLEM?
WHY CAN'T I SHOW
IT TO 'EM NOW?

IT... IT'S
PRETTY GOOD,
CHARLIE! I'D
EN... WANT TO
STRAIGHTEN
IT UP A BIT!



WE'LL BE OVER IN HALF
AN HOUR, VIC! G'LONG!
CLICK!

CHARLIE! WAIT!
BLAST! HE RUNG
UP!



HALF AN HOUR, VIC? YOU'VE GOT TO GET RID OF
HELEN'S BODY! THINGS AREN'T GOING EXACTLY AS
YOUR PLANED... EN? YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT CHARLIE
... YOUR REAL-ESTATE AGENT FRIEND! HE'S INSISTED
THAT HE COULD SUBLEASE YOUR APARTMENT WHILE
YOU WERE GONE.



THE CLOSET? I'LL HAVE
HEN BODY 'RO? THOSE
PEOPLE'LL HAVE AROUND
IN THE CLOSETS!

NOW YOU'RE FRIGHTENED, VIC? IT'S BROAD DAYLIGHT
OUTSIDE! YOU'D NEVER BE ABLE TO PUT HELEN'S
BODY IN THE TRUNK OF THE CAR NOW! YOU'VE GOT
TO THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE... AND FAST!



WHERE CAN I HIDE HER?
WHERE? I... I...

IT'S ONLY A THREE ROOM APARTMENT, VIC!
WHERE CAN YOU HIDE HER BODY WHERE PEOPLE WHO
ARE GOING TO INSPECT IT WON'T LOOK? AND THEN,
YOU SEE IT, IN THE KITCHEN...



OF COURSE! THE FREEZER!
THE FROZEN FOOD LOCKER!

BUT THEY **WENT** LOOK THERE TOO, VIC!
CAREFUL, NOW! YOU'VE GOT TO **THINK**! IF
 THEY **SAY** SOMETHING THEY WERE **FAMILIAR**
 WITH... **YES... THAT'S IT, VIC! HURRY NOW!**
 ONLY **TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES** TO GO! **DRAG**
 HER BODY TO THE **BATHROOM**...



THE **KNIFE**? THE **BIG** ONE IN
 THE **CASE**? **THAT'S** THE **ONE**!
HURRY...



... **BROWN PAPER**? **NEVER** USED
 TO **SAVE** IT! **THERE?** IN THE
CABINET, UNDER THE **SINK**?
NOW YOU'VE **FOUND** IT...



INTO THE **PUR**? **AND** **NOW** YOU'RE **TALKING**...



HURRY, VIC! **TWENTY-TWO**
MINUTES LEFT! YOU'VE GOT
WORK TO DO... AN **AWFUL** LOT
 OF **WORK** TO DO! **BACK** INTO
 THE **BATHROOM**...



SPREAD OUT THE **SHEETS** OF **BROWN PAPER** ON THE
FLOOR! **NOW**, **TURN** ON THE **WATER** IN THE **TUB**!
 IT'LL **MAKE** THE **SOUP** JOB **EASIER**... **LESS** **MESSY**!
THERE! **THAT'S** IT...



AND **NOW**, **VICTOR** **PERSON**... **START** **CUTTING** UP
 YOUR **MURDERED** WIFE'S **CORPSE**? **BECAUSE**...
VICTOR... YOU'RE GOING TO **WRAP** UP **EACH**
PIECE AND **STOVE** THEM IN THE **FROZEN**
FOOD **LOCKER**, JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHER
PACKAGES OF **FROZEN** **MEATS**? **STEEL**
YOURSELF, **VICTOR**! THE **FIRST** **BAG** IS THE
HARDEST? **HURRY**, **NOW**! **HURRY**? **THERE**...



AND NOW... IT'S DONE! IT'S AMAZING, ISN'T IT VICTOR, HOW *QUICK* YOU CAN GET INTO ONE OF THOSE LOCKERS? AND *JUST* IN CASE, YOU'VE HIDDEN THE TELL-TALE SECTIONS UNDER-NEATH, AND PUT THE MORE IMMEDIATE WORKINGS ON TOP! PUT THAT LAST PACKAGE IN NOW...



WAIT, VICTOR! DON'T BREATHE A WHIFF OF RELIEF, YET! CLEAN UP THE BATHROOM! THE BLOODY KNIFE! THE STAINED FUR AND SPATTERED WALL! THE STICKY FLOOR! THAT'S THE BOY! MAKE IT SPOTLESS...



THE DOORBELL, VICTOR! THEY'RE HERE! HURRY! THE KITCHEN FLOOR! YOU FORGOT IT...

NICE AND CLEAN! THERE...

EVERYTHING IS SET, VICTOR! OPEN 'EM UP! HELLO! COME IN, THIS IS MR. AND MRS. JOHNSON! FOLKS... CHARLIE...



MR. AND MRS. JOHNSON START THEIR NOBBL' AROUND. YOU FOLLOW THEM? AND YOU WERE RIGHT! THE CLOSETS ARE THE FIRST THINGS THEY PEEK INTO...

THE BEDROOM... THE LIVING ROOM... THE KITCHEN...

OH, YOU HAVE A *FABULOUS* FOOD LOCKER! HOW CONVENIENT!

IT... IT'LL BE EMPTY WHEN YOU'RE READY TO MOVE IN, MR. JOHNSON!

IT'S LIKE THE PLACE, WHEN CAN WE MOVE IN, MR. BENSON?

THEY'LL ALL BE EMPLOYED OUT, FOLKS! HELLO! NOW COME...

I'M PACKING THE STUFF FORWARD, CHARLIE! HELEN TOOK ONLY WHAT SHE NEEDED!



TOMORROW, IF YOU
LIKE! I'M LEAVING
TODAY! MY WIFE
AND I TOOK A
PLACE IN THE
MOUNTAINS
FOR THREE MONTHS!

OH! WELL! TODAY'S
FRIDAY! WE'LL PROBABLY
MOVE IN ON MONDAY!
YEE... WE'LL TAKE THE
PLACE, MR. BENSON!
IT'S LOVELY!



THEY START TO LEAVE! YOU'RE ANXIOUS, AREN'T YOU,
VIC? YOU WANT TO GET YOUR WIFE'S REMAINS OUT OF
THE FROZEN FOOD LOCKER! THEN...

BETTER GIVE ME THE
KEY, VIC! YOU'LL BE HOME
WHEN THE JOHNSONS
COME BACK!

OH! YEAH! SURE!
HERE, CHARLIE!



I'LL BE BACK
LATER, VIC! I'LL
HELP YOU PACK!

NEVER MIND,
CHARLIE! I...

NO PROBLEM, VIC!
BE BACK SOON
AS I DRIVE THESE
FOLKS TO THE
STATION!

CHARLIE!
TO RATHER
YOU WOULDN'T...
NOTHER!
CHARLIE!

BUT HE DOESN'T LISTEN! AND
THEN HE'S GONE! YOU DUNCE!
BUT WHAT ARE YOU WORRIED
ABOUT, VIC? YOU'RE TAKING
THE CONTENTS OF THE LOCKER
APART! WHAT'S WRONG WITH
THAT? CHARLIE WILL EVEN HELP
YOU LOAD THE CAR.



SO YOU BEGIN TO PACK! WHAT A SET-UP! YOU'LL
SAY HELEN NEVER GOT TO THE CASH... THAT SHE
JUST DISAPPEARED! CHARLIE COMES BACK SOON
AFTER...



SOON AS WE GET THE
MEAT AND FROZEN STUFF
PACKED INTO THE CAR!
O'MOR! HELP ME!

SURE! HEY! PHONE'S
RINGING...



YOU PICK UP THE PHONE? IT'S ED... YOUR PARTNER...

SORRY TO CALL LIKE THIS, VIO? I KNOW YOU AND HELEN START YOUR VACATION TOMORROW! BUT... WELL... YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO DELAY THE TRIP!

WHAT? BUT HELEN'S LEFT ALREADY! SHE WENT ON AHEAD!

IT'LL ONLY BE A DAY OR TWO, VIO! I'D TAKE CARE OF IT MYSELF ONLY I DON'T KNOW THE ACCOUNT! IT'S EXACTLY IN SAVILLE!

SAVILLE? BUT I'M GOING NORTH... NOT SOUTH...

SORRY, VIO! RUN DOWN AND SEE WHAT'S UP! HELEN WON'T MIND! YOU KNOW WHAT THIS ACCOUNT MEANS TO US!

I KNOW! BLAST IT! WELL! I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO-ED!

YOU HANG UP... ANNOYED...

WHAT'S UP, VIO? YOU LOOK BORED!

I'VE GOT TO GO DOWN TO SAVILLE ON BUSINESS! C'MON! LET'S FINISH LOADING THE CAR!

BUT YOU CAN'T PUT THE FROZEN STUFF IN NOW! IT'LL SPOIL BEFORE YOU GO THERE AND THEN BACK! UPDATE TO YOUR CUBIN! WHY NOT PICK IT UP ON THE WAY BACK? I'D HAVE TO SEE ALL THAT MEAT FROZEN!

YOU'RE RIGHT, CHARLIE! C'MON! I'VE GOT TO MAKE TIME! I'LL DRIVE YOU HOME! AND THANKS FOR RENTING THE PLACE! I'LL TRY AND GET BACK BEFORE THE JOHNSON MOVE IN!

THEY'RE NOT MOVING IN TILL MONDAY! YOU'LL BE BACK BEFORE THEN!

OH... SURE! I SHOULD BE BACK BY SUNDAY! POOR HELEN! SHE'LL WORRY ABOUT ME! I'D BETTER SEND HER A TELEGRAM!

SO YOU DRIVE SOUTH TO SAVILLE, VICTOR BENSON AND ALL THE WAY DOWN, YOUR MIND IS ON THOSE BROWN PAPER PACKAGES IN THE FREEZER BACK IN YOUR APARTMENT.

BLAST IT! THIS WOULD HAVE TO COME UP...

IN DAYVILLE, YOU SEE ENHART
AND STRAIGHTEN EVERYTHING OUT!
THEN YOU SPEED BACK! IT'S SUNDAY
AFTERNOON WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT
THE APARTMENT...



GOOD LORD! THE
KEY! I HAVE IT TO
CHARLIE!

YOU DASH OVER TO CHARLIE'S
HOME...



CHARLIE!
E...

VIC! COME
IN! YOU'RE
JUST IN
TIME!

I NEED THE
KEY, CHARLIE!
I ...



YOU'LL JOIN US
FOR DINNER!
VIC! FOLKS!
THIS IS NO
BENSON... A
FRIEND OF MINE!

CHARLIE HAS COMPANY! THEY'RE JUST SITTING DOWN
TO DINNER...



REALLY, CHARLIE! I
WANT TO SETON MY
WIFE! JUST GIVE ME
THE KEY SO I CAN
PACK THE STUFF...

WOWWWW! YOU'LL HAVE
A WIFE WITH US FIRST!
THEN I'LL DRIVE OVER
WITH YOU!

YOU TRY TO WORK YOUR WAY OUT, BUT CHARLIE IS
INSTANT! SO YOU SIT DOWN WITH THEM! YOU'RE
NEVERMORE... ARRIGH! YOU PICK AT YOUR FOOD...



I THOUGHT YOU
LIKED SOULLESS,
VIC!

I... I DO, CHARLIE!
IT'S VERY GOOD!

CHARLIE SHAPS HIS FINGERS AND LAUGHS...



WEE! I ALMOST FORGOT! YOU'D
BETTER ENJOY IT, VIC! THE WIFE
CALLED THIS PARTY AT THE LAST
MOMENT! THE BUTCHER WAS
CLOSED...

HURT?

YEAH! IT'S YOUR MEAT! I
BORROWED IT... TOOK
IT FROM YOUR FREEZER!
YOU DON'T MIND, DO YOU?



OHORE...

WHAT'S
FADING,
VIC? YOU...
LOOK
SICK!

THE
END.

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TENSION
IN THE
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wood.

BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE SHOCKING FINAL
TWIST TO THIS GRIPPING TALE OF TENSION...

DEAD RIGHT!

**A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY**



GATHY DRAINED THE LAST DROP OF TEA FROM HER CUP AND STARED DOWN AT THE TINY TEA LEAVES THAT FLOCKED THE BOTTOM! THEN SHE GLANCED ABOUT THE TINY SYRUP TEARDROP! MADAME YOUNG NODDED TO HER...

YOU WANT ME TO READ YOUR
PORTFOLIO IN THE TEA LEAVES
MY DEAR? I WILL BE WITH YOU
IN A MOMENT!

DEAR...I'LL
WAIT!

CATHY SAT BACK AND LIT A CIGARETTE. THE SMOKE CUPLED UP LAZILY, DRIFTING TOWARD THE CEILING OF THE PICTURE-SOME TEARDROP-SOON MAGNIFIC WORKS WOULD BE READING CATHY'S TEA LEAVES ONCE MORE! CATHY RELIEVED IN MAGNIFIC WORKS... SHE HAD TO FORGIVE THEM SHE READ CATHY'S FORTUNE ACCORDINGLY! CATHY THOUGHT ABOUT THAT FIRST TIME...

YOU WORK FOR A LIVING... AN OFFICE CLERK! YOU DO NOT TYPE ANY WELL, DO YOU?

HEY! THAT'S PRETTY GOOD!

ALL YOUR LIFE YOU HAVE DESIGNED TO MARRY WELL... TO MARRY FOR MONEY! BUT YOUR CHANGE HAS NEVER COME, SO YOU KEEP ON WORKING AND HOPEING!

SAY, HONEY YOU'RE PRETTY CHARMY SO ON!

TODAY, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR JOB!

MR. GAW IT, DID MY SPIN IS OUT OF TOWN, SO I COULDN'T GET FIRED TODAY ANYWAY! WHICH REMINDS ME! I'D BETTER GET READY! MY LUNCH HOUR IS ALMOST UP!

YES! CATHY REMEMBERED THAT FIRST DAY WELL! SHE'D COME BACK TO THE OFFICE AND...

WHY, MR. CLAYTON? I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU BACK TODAY!

IS THIS HOW YOU TAKE CARE OF THINGS WHILE I'M GONE, MISS FINCH?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND MR. CLAYTON!

THE ELEVATOR MAN TOLD ME YOU WENT OUT TO LUNCH AT FIFTEEN! YOU KNOW THAT WE ALLOW ONLY ONE HOUR FOR LUNCH!

OF COURSE I KNOW THAT! SO WHAT?

SO YOU'RE FIRED, MISS FINCH! IT'S ONE TWENTY-FIVE!

THE CLOCK! THE CLOCK! THAT LITTLE STUPID TEARDROP HAD BEEN HALF AN HOUR SLOW! THAT STUPID KNEW IT! CATHY STORMED IN...

THE CLOCK! HALF AN HOUR SLOW! SO IT IS! I DIDN'T NOTICE! BUT YOU FORGET, MISS! I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOUR EMPLOYER WAS OUT OF TOWN! HOW COULD I TELL HE'D COME BACK... UNEXPECTEDLY?

THAT... THAT'S RIGHT!

AND THAT SECOND TIME CATHY STOPPED IN WHILE JOE HUNTING THE STREPT EXAMINED HER GUP AND ANNOUNCED...

YOU ARE STILL OUT OF A JOB! YOUR SAVINGS ARE RUNNING LOW! BUT WAIT! DO NOT WORRY! I SEE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY IN YOUR LIFE SOMEDAY! AND A MAN! AND OH... I SEE A JOB... TODAY!



SHE'D BEEN RIGHT AGAIN! THAT WAS THE DAY CATHY'D LARGED HER JOB IN THE RESTAURANT.

YOU WERE RIGHT! MADAME VORNA! I DID GET A JOB TODAY!

I SEE! FOR... YOU CARRY SOMETHING FOR FOOD? YOU ARE A WAITRESS!



YOU'RE ASTOUNDING! MADAM VORNA! TELL ME! DO YOU SEE ANYTHING ABOUT THAT DOUGH AND THAT GUP?

YES! THE MAN. YOU WILL MARRY HIM! BUT, WAIT! HE WILL NOT BE RICH AT THE TIME OF YOUR MARRIAGE!



FAT CHANCE! I'M NOT MARRIAGE ANY MORE UNLESS HE'S LOADED ALREADY! ER... IS IT... LOVE?

HE WILL INHERIT THE MONEY IMMEDIATELY FROM SOMEONE NEAR AND DEAR TO HIM! SOON AFTER YOU ARE MARRIED! WAIT! I SEE SOMEONE ASKING YOU FOR DATE TOMORROW! A LARGE MAN...



MADAME VORNA HAD BEEN RIGHT FOR THE THIRD TIME! THE NEXT DAY, CATHY WAS ASKED FOR A DATE! BUT SHE TOOK ONE LOOK AT HIM, AND...

NO THANKS, RUSTEN! I'M BUSY TONIGHT!

THEN HOW ABOUT TOMORROW NIGHT, GUTE STUFF!



AND THAT NIGHT, CATHY'D GONE BACK TO MADAM VORNA...

YOU WERE RIGHT! MONEY! I DID GET ASKED FOR A DATE TODAY! WHEN YOU SAID A LARGE MAN, YOU WERE CORRECT! THIS GUY WAS DISCUSSING A FAT SLOP! NOW, WHAT ABOUT MY FUTURE HUSBAND? YOU SAID HE'D INHERIT MONEY!

YES! I SEE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY! BUT WAIT! SOON AFTER HE INHERITS THIS MONEY, HE WILL DIE... VIOLENTLY!



YOU MEAN I'M GOING TO BE A WIDOW? A RICH WIDOW?

NOW I SEE THE LARGE MAN AGAIN! HE IS SITTING AT A TABLE! HE IS ASKING YOU FOR ANOTHER DATE?



THAT'S BEEN THAT VERY AFTERNOON! THE GREAT INDIVIDUAL HAD COME INTO THE RESTAURANT AGAIN! GATHE COULDN'T STAND HIM! THE GORE OF HIS PERSPIRATION HAD SICKENED HER! WHEN HE'D SPOKE, GATHE'D CAUGHT A WHIFF OF HIS FOUL BREATH...

O'HON, BERT! GIMME A BREAK! WHAT NIGHT AIN'T YUH BUSY?

I'M BUSY EVERY NIGHT, AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED, BUSTER!



THE CHARRETTE SMOKE COILED UPWARD TO THE CEILING OF THE UPPER TEAROOM! SUDDENLY, MADAME VORNA STOOD OVER GATHE...

I AM READY NOW, MY DEAR! LET ME HAVE YOUR CUP!

HERE! AND FORGET THAT HORRIBLE FAT GORE, NOW! TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT FELLER I'M GONNA MARRY! THE GUY THAT'S GONNA INHERIT ALL THE DOUGH!



MADAME VORNA TOOK GATHE'S CUP...

ANY I SEE THE LARGE MAN GOO ASK YOU FOR A DATE, AND YOU WERE RUDE TO HIM...

IF YOU CAME WITHIN SIX FEET OF HIM, YOU'D BE RUDE TOO! WHERE?



BUT HE, THE LARGE MAN... HE IS THE ONE YOU'LL MARRY! HE IS THE ONE WHO WILL INHERIT THE LARGE SUM OF MONEY SOON AFTER YOU ARE MARRIED!

OH, NO?

BUT SHORTLY AFTER-WARD, HE WILL DIE VIOLENTLY! THAT IS WHAT I SEE!

SHORTLY AFTER-WARD, OH?



THAT NIGHT, GATHE THOUGHT IT ALL OVER... JUST WHAT MADAME VORNA HAD READ IN THE TEALANTS.

SHE'S BEEN RIGHT FOUR TIMES ALREADY! AND SHE DOES SEE THE FAT GORE DYING SOON AFTER HE INHERITS ALL THAT DOUGH! VIOLENTLY, SHE SAID! MAYBE HE'LL GET KILLED IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT! AND IF I'M MARRIED TO HIM...



SO GATHE STEELED HERSELF... HID HER REVULSION...

AND... HELLO, BERT! BUSY TONIGHT AGAIN?

FORGOTT! WHY, WHY, AND! TONIGHT I'M NOT CHORE... BUSY!



CATHY ALMOST THREW UP WHEN HE TOOK HER HAND IN HIS GREASY BLOATED PAW...

HOW 'BOUT GOIN' OUT WITH ME T'NIGHT, CUTHY?

ALL RIGHT! ...CHUCK...

IT WAS HORRIBLE! THE EVENING WAS LIKE A NIGHTMARE! CHARLIE MARNO WAS HIS NAME! HE TOOK CATHY TO A MOVIE! THEY SAT THERE TOGETHER IN THE DARK, CATHY RETCHING WITH EACH BREATH SHE TOOK...

IT'S GOOD PIPPOER, Y-Y-YES, CH, CATHY? CHARLIE?

AND AFTERWARDS, DINING WITH THE LUMBERING CH IN A CHEAP NIGHT-CLUB...

HAIN? A GOOD TIME, CATHY? SHIP... CHARLIE?

CATHY WAS SICK TO HER STOMACH ALL THAT NIGHT! THE NEXT DAY, AS SOON AS SHE COULD GET AWAY, SHE RUSHED TO MADAME YOUNG...

I'VE GOT TO BE SURE, MADAME YOUNG! IT'S GOT TO BE PROOF, IS? YOU SAID IT WAS A LOT OF MONEY HE'D INVENT! HOW MUCH?

HIS INITIALS? I SEE HIS INITIALS, M!

CHARLES MARNO? YES! THAT'S RIGHT! CAN YOU SEE HOW MUCH MONEY?

I SEE... I SEE TWENTY. NO... TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS!

CATHY WAS SURE NOW! FOR TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS, SHE COULD STAND ANYTHING! EVEN DISGRACE! CHARLIE MARNO! THEN, SEVERAL WEEKS OF WAITING LATER... SEVERAL HORRIBLE WEEKS OF BEING NEAR HIM! CHARLIE PROPOSED...

I AIN'T GOT MUCH NOW, CATHY! BUT I GOT GOOD PROSPECTS! WILL YUH MARRY ME?

CHARLIE! DO YOU HAVE ANYONE CLOSE TO YOU... A BROTHER, OR AN AUNT... WHO IS... ER... RIGHT?

MY UNCLE'S GOT A FACTORY! HE'S WORTH SOMETHIN'! BUT I WOULDN'T ASK HIM FOR ANYTHIN'!

OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT, CHARLIE! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO ASK HIM! YES, CHARLIE! I'LL MARRY YOU!



FOR A MOMENT...FOR A MISERABLE SICKENING MOMENT...WHEN CHARLIE TOOK HER INTO HIS ARMS AND PLANTED HIS FLABBY LIPS UPON HERS, CATHY THOUGHT OF CHOOSING THE WHOLE DEAL! BUT "TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS" BOOMED IN HER BEELING BRAIN.



OH, BABY! BABY!
WE'RE GONNA BE
SO HAPPY!

SURE, CHARLIE!
CHOKO... SURE!

SO SHE WENT THROUGH WITH IT! SHE MARRIED HIM! THEY WENT ON A CHEAP HONEYMOON... TO A TWO-BIT RESORT HOTEL NEAR THE SEA-SHORE! CATHY WAS ALMOST TOO SHAMED TO BE SEEN WITH CHARLIE! WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE IN A BATHING SUIT...



MMMM! SMELL THAT
FRESH AIR, BABY!
HIDE, EH?

YES, CHARLIE!
FIRST FRESH AIR
I'VE HAD IN DAYS!

AND AFTER THE HONEYMOON, CHARLIE AND CATHY MOVED INTO A SHABBY FURNISHED ROOM...THE DAYS AND NIGHTS CHANGLED BY...PAINFULLY! CATHY WRITES...

BY THE WAY, CHARLIE! HAVE
YOU HEARD FROM YOUR
UNCLE RECENTLY? YOU
KNOW...THE RICH ONE!

HONEYMOON ON HIM?
HMM? WHY SHOULD
I HEAR FROM HIM?
HE'S OUT WEST...
WITH HIS FAMILY!



FAMILY? YOU DON'T
TELL ME!

YOU DON'T ASK ME!
SAY, WHAT'S THE
DIFFERENCE ANYWAY?



A MONTH PASSES! THEN TWO!
CATHY WENT BACK TO THE DOPPY
TEAROOM...

TELL ME, MADAME
VORNA! WHEN WILL HE
INHERIT THE MONEY?
TELL ME! I CAN'T
STAND IT MUCH
LONGER!



...HIS
DEATH?

THANKS, MADAME
VORNA! I'LL...
BE SEEING YOU!



WITH MADAME VORNA'S ASSU-
RANCE, CATHY WENT BACK TO
LIVING WITH CHARLIE WITH
RENEWED DETERMINATION...

C'MON I'M NO, I CHOKO, I'M
DOPPY!

NOT TIRED,
CHARLIE!



AND THEN IT HAPPENED! CATHY STOPPED IN AT A LARGE CAFETERIA IN TOWN FOR A BITE TO EAT! AS SHE TOOK HER CHAIR AND MOVED DOWN THE LINE OF COUNTERS...



"FUNNY! I GOT THE STRANGEST FEELIN' THAT EVERYBODY'S WATCHIN' ME!"

WHAT'LL IT BE, MA'AM?

I'LL HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE...

HOLD IT?

LIGHTS!



SUDDENLY, THE CAFETERIA WAS FLOODED WITH BLINDING LIGHT! CATHY SPUN AROUND! EVERYONE WAS APPLAUDING! A MAN IN A BLUE SERGE SUIT STEPPED FORWARD, SMILING...

FOUR LADY! CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE NETHERLAND CAFETERIA'S ONE MILLIONTH CUSTOMER! NOW IF YOU WILL GIVE US YOUR NAME...

C-CATHY! MRS. CATHY MARR! I DON'T UNDERSTAND!



SOMEONE HANDED THE SMILING MAN A RECTANGULAR PIECE OF PAPER...

MRS. MARR! THE MANAGEMENT OF NETHERLAND CAFETERIA TAKES PLEASURE IN PRESENTING YOU... OUR MILLIONTH CUSTOMER... WITH A CHECK... FOR TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS!

GASP!



IT TOOK CATHY SEVERAL HOURS TO COMPOSE HERSELF! TO WATCH EVERYONE SHE CAME HOME... THE CASH IN HER POCKETBOOK...

CATHY! THAT YES, IT'S ME, YOUR FOUNDER!



CATHY!

SHE WAS WRONG, YOU FAT SLOB! MADAME FOUNDER WAS WRONG! IT WAS ME THAT GOT THE TWENTY-FIVE GRAND! NOT YOU!



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, CATHY? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I MEAN I'M LIZARD AND YOU DON'T NEED YOU NOW! I'M WALKING OUT THANKS FOR THREE MONTHS OF PERPETUAL NAUSEA!



CHARLIE MOVED QUICKLY...SAVING THE DOOR...

CATHY! YOU CAN'T WALK OUT ON ME! WE LOVE EACH OTHER!

LOVE! MAN! I CAN'T STAND BEING NEAR YOU!



GATHY!

GET OUT OF MY HAT, YOU FILTHY, SMELLY...



CATHY!

CHARLIE! DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT!



IF I CAN'T HAVE YOU... NOBODY CAN!

CHARLIE! PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE!

CHARLIE BROUGHT THE GLEAMING KNIFE BLADE DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN! CATHY'S HAT FELL TO THE FLOOR... THE TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS SPILLING OUT, SLOTTING OUT THE BLOOD...



IF I...MARR...CAN'T HAVE YOU... NOBODY CAN... UNLESS...



ONE DAY, SHORTLY AFTER CATHY'S MURDER, A WINDY BRIZZE SWIFT ACROSS A SILENT, CEMETERY, CARRYING WITH IT A FLUTTERING SHEET OF NEWSPAPER...



THE PAPER CAME TO REST BY A HEADSTONE PAID FOR WITH THE MONEY CHARLES MARNO HAD INHERITED...



THE HEADLINES SCREAMED IN HUGE LETTERS...



HERE IS AN ELECTRIFYING STORY WITH SOLID IMPACT
IN ITS STARTLING CONCLUSION!

UNDER COVER!

THE WOMAN SCREAMED! ONE OF THEM PUNCHED HER AND SHE FELL TO HER KNEES! ANOTHER LASHED HER ARMS BEHIND HER BACK! THEY STOOD AROUND HER... SILENTLY... SOMBERLY! NO ONE SPARED THEIR EYES BURNED FROM BEHIND THE HOLES IN THEIR BLACK HOODS! THE WOMAN BEGAN TO SOB... WHISPERING SOFTLY THE TEARS STREAMED FROM HER EYES, DOWN HER BRUISED CHEEKS! SHE FELL TO HER KNEES, LOOKING FROM ONE HOODED FACE TO ANOTHER... PLEASINGLY...

AIN'T SOMMA DO YOU NO GOOD, SUEY CARSON!

YOU NEED A LESSON! YOU'RE GONNA GET IT!

WE'RE GONNA TEACH YOU NOT TO FOOL AROUND WITH THEM!

YOU'RE GONNA GET THE WHIPPIN' OF YOUR LIFE, SUEY CARSON!

**A SHOCK
SUSPENSE STORY**

THE WOMAN FELL FACE DOWNWARD, HER BODY TREMBLING WITH EACH BURSTED SOB! A VOICE CALLED OUT...

MAKE WAY FOR THE GRAND MASTER!

THE BLACK-HOODED FORMS LOOKED UP FROM THE PROSTRATE WOMAN! A FIGURE APPEARED, MOVING INTO THE CIRCLE! HE WAS DRESSED DIFFERENTLY THAN THE OTHERS! HE WAS THEIR LEADER! HIS HOOD GLEAMED BLOODY-RED IN THE FIRELIGHT...

HITCH 'ER TO THE TREE! GIVE ME THE WHIP!

YES, GRAND MASTER!

TWO BLACK-HOODED FIGURES LIFTED THE SCREAMING WOMAN AND DROPPED HER TO A TREE! HER ARMS WERE UNTIED AND SWUNG AROUND ITS TRUNK...THEN RETIED ONCE AGAIN...

SHE IS READY, GRAND MASTER!

BEST CARROT FOR CONSENTING WITH...WITH THAT FLASH ELEMENT IN OUR TOWN, THE BLACK HAT-LANTE SOCIETY SENTENCES YOU TO ONE HUNDRED LASHES!



THE STRAP LASHED DOWNWARD ACROSS THE WOMAN'S BACK! THE COUNT BEGAN

ONE...



THE BELT ROSE AND FELL AGAIN...

TWO...



SAMUEL MASTERS TURNED AWAY FROM THE HORRIBLE SIGHT...A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPING OVER HIM...

THREE... OH, LORD! LORD...



SAMUEL MASTERS SHOOK HIS HEAD! HE BLID DOWNWARD UNTIL HE SAT WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS! THE VOICE IN THE CLEARING DRIPT TO HIS HIDING PLACE...BEHIND THE SHARP CRACK OF THE LEATHER STRAP...

FOUR!

THE DIRTY FILTHY ROTTEN OH, LORD! WHY DO THEY DO THIS? WHY DID I HAVE TO SEE IT! WILL I EVER SLEEP AGAIN?



FIVE!

BLAST YOU TO PENTON! BLAST YOU! WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP ME? WHY DID YOU LET ME STICK MY NOSE IN? WHY DID YOU LET ME START? NOW, NOW I'LL HAVE TO...FORGET IT!



THE FALLING STRAP FACED! THE
 SCANDAL OF A BUSTY NEWSPAPER
 OFFICE! CAME UP! BARCEL MARTENS
 WAS THERE... THINKING ABOUT THE
 DAY HE'D VOLUNTEERED...

LOOK, SAM! I KNOW
 HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THOSE
 THOSE FLOBBING!
 ALL I'M SAYING IS,
 IT'S TROUBLE!
 KEEP OUT OF IT!

ALL RIGHT! ALL
 RIGHT! THEY'RE
 A MENACE! ARE
 YOU GOING TO
 FIGHT THEM
 SINGLE-HANDED?

LOOKED!
 THEY'VE KID-
 NAPPED AND
 FLOBBED
 INNOCENT
 PEOPLE...
 GUILTY OF
 NOTHING MORE
 THAN PRACTICING
 DEMOCRACY! THE
 F.B.I. IS INTER-
 ESTED!

AND YOU'RE
 GOING TO HELP
 THE F.B.I. CATCH
 'EM? LITTLE
 DETECTIVE?
 JUNIOR S-MAN?

I'M GOING
 THERE FOR A
 STORY, SAM!
 I'M GOING TO
 EXPOSE THIS
 ROTTEN MESS!
 HOW DO I GET
 YOUR GRAT,
 OR DON'T I?



WHY'D YOU
 BE A HERO?
 SEE WHERE IT
 GETS YOU! JUST
 ONE THING,
 SAM! BE
 CAREFUL! DON'T
 GET YOURSELF
 KILLED!

KILLED! KILLED! THE WORD EXPLODED
 IN SAM'S BRAIN! HE JOKED HIS HEAD UP
 FROM HIS HIDING PLACE...

I SAID SHE'S
 DEAD! KILLED
 HER!
 YOU
 SURE?
 YINKE
 HER?



A BLACK-HOODED FIGURE STEPPED FORWARD AND
 OUT THE HOPES! WHIMPERED THE BUSTY-BOOBS
 AROUND THE TREE! HER LIFELESS BODY SLID TO
 THE GROUND LIMPLY...



THE LEADER... THE RED-HOODED ONE, REMOVED HIS
 MASK AND KNELT TO LISTEN TO THE GIRL'S HEART...



THE FRIGHT DANCED ON HIS PERSPIRING FACE...



IN HIS HIDING PLACE, SAM MASTERFULLY PLANNED FORWARD, STUDYING THE UNARMED GANG LEADER... STUDYING HIS FACE...



"I KNOW YOU KNOW YOU DIRTY SON-OF-A-BITCH! IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO, I'LL SEE THAT YOU BURN FOR THIS!"

THE BLACK-HOODED FIGURES MOVED OFF TOWARD THEIR CARS! THE LEADER SLIPPED HIS RED MASK BACK OVER HIS FACE ONCE MORE! TWO OF THE GANG LIFTED THE DEAD WOMAN'S BODY...



"WE'LL BURY HIM IN THE RIVER!"

"GOOD! ALL RIGHT! LET'S BREAK UP!"

THE CLEARING WAS DESERTED! THE FINE DUSTED LOW/RAIN CAME OUT FROM HIS HIDING PLACE, WATCHING THE LAST SAM'S TAIL LIGHT DRAGGING DOWN THE LONELY COUNTRY ROAD...



"IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO..."

A THIS WRAPPED BERING SANK HE SPUN AROUND! TWO HOODED FIGURES STAYED AT HIM...



"WHAT THE...? REPORTER?"

"GET HIM!"

SAM BEGAN TO RUN! BEHIND THE HOODED FIGURES CHARGED THROUGH THE UNDERBUSH AFTER HIM...



"HE MUSTA SEEN 'EM! WE'LL SHUT WHAT HAPPENED?"

IT SEEMED TO SAM THAT HE'D BEEN RUNNING FOR HOURS WHEN HE FINALLY FELL TO THE GROUND, EXHAUSTED...



"GOT TO... GET... HIDE? IF THEY FIND ME..."

SAM LAY IN THE UNDERBUSH, SCARCELY BREATHING! THE TWO HOODED FIGURES PEEPED IN, CLOSE ENOUGH FOR HIM TO REACH OUT AND TOUCH THEM...



AFTER A WHILE, THEY DARED BACK...
BREATHING HEAVILY...

STUPID! YOU
YOU HE WENT THE
OTHER WAY!

OHMYGOD WE LOST
HIM! HE WON'T
GET FAR! WE'LL
TELL THE OTHERS!

HEY! DO YOU
THINK HE SAW
THE... THE
BRAND
MASTERS' FACE?

I NEVER THOUGHT
OF THAT! YOU
MEAN, WHEN HE
TOOK OFF HIS
MASK?

YEAH! HELL...GO
TO THE F.B.I.
WE'LL IDENTIFY
HIM!

"IF HE SAW HIS
FACE! WE CAN'T
BE SURE!
O'MON!" LET'S
GET BACK INTO
TOWN!

IT WAS STARTING TO RAIN WHEN SAM MASTERS
SLIPPED BACK INTO TOWN AND MADE HIS WAY
TOWARD HIS HOTEL...

"GLOW! A CAR'S PARKED IN FRONT! MOTOR'S
RUNNING! I CAN TELL FROM THE EXHAUST!"
THEY'RE WAITING FOR ME! I'VE GOT TO
EMERGE IN... THROUGH THE BACK!"



THE CLERK HANDED SAM THE PHONE...

HELLO? HELLO, OPERATOR? I
GIVE ME THE F.B.I.
QUICKLY!

GOOD LORD!
THE VIGILANTES!



SAM DARTED DOWN AN ALLEY AND ACROSS THE REAR
YARDS OF THE BUILDINGS THAT LINED THE MAIN
STREET! FINALLY HE REACHED THE HOTEL'S BACK
ENTRANCE...

WHO'S THAT? OH! MR
MASTERS!

I'VE GOT TO MAKE A
CALL. "QUICK!" GIVE
ME THE PHONE!



THEY CROSSED THE LOBBY. THERE WERE FOUR
OF THEM, THEIR EYES RIVETED ON SAM FROM THE
HOLES IN THEIR BLACK HOODS...

PAT DOWN THE
ANDRUM OUT AT THE
PHONE, MUTH!

DO YOU WANT MURDER?
YOU'LL BE OUT AT THE
CLEANING TONIGHT!

WE'LL TEACH
REPORTERS
TO NOSE
AROUND!



SAM JACKED UP THE HOODED
FIGURES MOVED IN...

WHAT DID YOU
SEE, MR-SHOOT?
WHAT DID YOU
SEE?

I SAW YOU
KILL THAT
WOMAN!

AND YOU WERE
GONNA TELL
THE F.B.I.?

WHAT ELSE
DID YOU
SEE,
MONEY?

DID
YOU
RECOGNIZE
ANYBODY?

THE GRANDMASTER
HAD HIS MASK OFF!
DID YOU SEE HIS
FACE?

NO! NO!
I DIDN'T
SEE ANY-
BODY'S
FACE!



YOU SURE,
MONEY? YOU
SURE?

I DIDN'T SEE
NOBODY!

HE SAID,
MISTER!
BE SURE!



I DIDN'T... NO... I TELL
YOU! I... DIDN'T...
UNNN... NO!

THE FOUR OF THEM MOVED IN ON SAM... PUNCHING...
KICKING... SWEARING...

THIS'LL... TEACH YOU...

MIND... UNNN...
YOUR OWN...
BUSINESS...

AND...
UNNN...
DON'T
UNNN...
TALK!



THE SLACKERS CLOSED IN ON SAM! THE SLACK-
ERS... AND THE PAIN...



THE FOG CLEARED! THE ROOM WAS BRIGHT! SAM LAY ON A HOSPITAL BED! A DOCTOR BENT OVER HIM! TWO MEN WHISPERED TOGETHER IN LOW TONES...



HE'S COMING TO
RENTLEMENT!
WH. WHERE
AM I? WHAT...
HAPPENED?
TAKE IT EASY,
MR. MASTER!

ONE OF THE MEN APPROACHED THE BED! HE FLASHED A BADGE...



YOU'VE BEEN OUT **GOLD** FOR
FOUR HOURS, MR. MASTER!
THEY HAVE YOU **GOOTIE** A
DEATH! I'M FROM THE **F.B.I.**!
YOU PUT IN A **CALL** TO US...
WHY DID
THEY
DO THIS,
MR.
MASTER?
I SAW
THEM!
I SAW
THEM
KILL A
POOR
FOGNEY!



KILL A
WOMAN?
THEY FLOORED
HER TO
DEATH!
CAN IT ALL?
DID YOU
SEE WHO
DID IT?
DID YOU SEE
ANY OF THEIR
FACES?



THE **GRAND MASTER**!
HE TOOK OFF HIS
MASK! I CAN
IDENTIFY HIM!
HE WAS THE ONE
THAT ACTUALLY
DID IT!



ARE YOU
SURE YOU
CAN IDENTIFY
HIM, MR.
MASTER?
POSITIVE! I
SAW HIS FACE
CLEARLY!
THAT'S ALL
WE WANTED
TO KNOW!

A FIGURE STEPPED FROM BEHIND THE SCREEN AND NOOKED THE TWO FRONT F.B.I. MEN AND THE FRONT DOCTOR PULLED THEIR GUNS AND FIRED...



BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!

THE GRAND MASTER LOOKED DOWN AT THE DEAD NEWS-PEPPERMAN...



...HIS PAPER'LL
MAKE **FEARABLE** FOR US...
WHEN THEY FIND HIS **BODY**!
BUT IT WON'T LAST LONG!
THEY'LL **GOOL** OFF! AND
WITHOUT AN IDENTIFYING
WITNESS... WE'RE **SAFE**!

YES... **SAFE**! **SAFE**!
BEHIND THEIR **MASKS** OF
PREJUDICE! THESE
HOOED FEEDERS OF
RACIAL, RELIGIOUS,
AND POLITICAL
HATRED OPERATE
TODAY! WHO YOU'HEY
ARE SHREWD AND
RUTHLESS MEN SUCH
AS THOSE IN OUR
COUNTRY NOW! CAN
WE STAY 'COOL'
AND INDIFFERENT
TO THIS THREAT TO
OUR DEMOCRATIC
WAY OF LIFE? IT IS
TIME TO UNWEIL
THESE USURERS OF
OUR CONSTITUTIONALLY
GUARANTEED FREEDOMS!

THE WIND-UP TO THIS SCIENCE-FICTION
YARN SHOULD GIVE YOU QUITE A JOLT...!

NOT SO TOUGH!



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY



I DON'T TYPE A HOOT WHERE YOU MADE YOUR SECOND ERROR. THE FACT IS: YOU MADE IT!

YES, SIR!



COMMANDER REDMAN SWITCHED UP THE SHIP'S INTERCOM MIKE AND BAWLED INTO IT...

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ALL HANDS! REPORT TO THE CONTROL ROOM IMMEDIATELY!

I'LL TRY TO BACK-TRACK, SIR... AND FIGURE OUT EXACT LOCATION!



NEVER MIND? ONE MISTAKE IS ENOUGH! YOU'RE THROUGH, ARGON! WASHED UP!

OUT... SIR...



THE CREW OF THE ROCKET-SHIP FILED INTO THE CONTROL ROOM! COMMANDER REDMAN LIT A CIGARETTE.

GENTLEMEN! LIEUTENANT ARGON, HERE, WHAT? ARGON! HAS JUST INFORMED ME THAT HE HAS MADE A SLIGHT ERROR IN THE CALCULATIONS FOR OUR COURSE SETTINGS... AND WE ARE NOW TRAVELING IN AN UNCHAOTIC SECTION OF OUR GALAXY!



THE STERN-FACED SHIP'S COMMANDER STEPPED FORWARD AND PUPPED LIEUTENANT ARGON'S EARS-LETS FROM HIS SLOUCH...

I HEREBY BELIEVE LIEUTENANT ARGON OF HIS COMMISSION AND DECKLE HIM TO THE RANK OF ROCKET-MAN, THIRD CLASS!

GAD? NO?



THE SAFETY OF THIS SHIP AND ITS CREW DEPENDS UPON THE JOBS PERFORMED BY EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF THAT CREW! LET THIS BE A LESSON TO ALL OF YOU! I WILL NOT TOLERATE MISTAKES! I'LL JUST ANYONE AND EVERYONE WHO FALLS DOWN ON HIS JOB! SERGEANT COOPER WILL TAKE OVER AS NAVIGATION OFFICER! THE REST OF YOU, DISMISSED!



THE CREW FILED SILENTLY OUT OF THE CONTROL ROOM! THE SE-COMMISSIONED OFFICER HUNG HIS HEAD, BITING HIS LIPS...

WELL, ARGON! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? YOU KNOW WHERE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS ARE! REPORT THERE FOR DUTY!

Y-YES, SIR!

ROBERT ARDEN MOVED DOWN THE CORRIDOR AND OPENED THE DOOR TO THE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS! INSIDE, THE NOISE OF BABBLING VOICES CAME SUDDENLY AS ALL EYES TURNED TOWARD HIM! THERE WAS A MOMENT OF ANXIOUS SILENCE AND THEN...



THERE'S AN EMPTY BUNK DOWN THERE, SON!

CAN I HELP YOU WITH YOUR FRANKS, SON?

FORGET THE 'SIR' STUFF. BOSS! THAT DOESN'T GO ANYMORE!

THEY CROWDED AROUND HIM, OFFERING THEIR SYMPATHY...



SEE, LIEUTENANT! WE'RE SORRY...

ROCKET-MAN THIRD CLASS, NOW! NOT LIEUTENANT! AND... CALL ME BOB!

JUST FOR ONE MISTAKE! ONE LONELY MISTAKE! WHAT A DIRTY TRICK!

YOU HEARD THE OLD MAN? ONE MISTAKE COULD MEAN THE SAFETY OF THE SHIP AND THE CREW!

SURE, SON! BUT EVEN THE BEST GUYS MAKE A MISTAKE! OKAY! BUT TO BUST YOU... RIGHT TO THE BOTTOM! THAT'S TOO HARD...

PERHAPS! THE COMMANDER'S A HARD MAN! BESIDES! WHAT HE DIDN'T TELL YOU IS... BECAUSE OF MY ONE MISTAKE... WE'RE LOST!

LOST!

SEE!



MEANWHILE, IN THE CONTROL ROOM, COMMANDER MORRIS BOWMAN AND HIS ASSISTANT OFFICER, VICE-COMMANDER PHILIP FORREST, WERE ARGUING...

BUT COODAN ISN'T QUALIFIED, MORRIS! YOU'VE GOT TO PUT ARDEN BACK ON THE JOB!

ARE YOU CRAZY, FORREST? I BUSTED HIM!



RECOMMISSION HIM! HE MIGHT FIND HIS MISTAKE AND FIGURE OUT LOCATION! FRANKLY, I'M WORRIED! HE ONLY HAS TWO MONTHS OXYGEN SUPPLY LEFT! SUPPOSE COODAN CAN'T LOCATE US! THEN, WHAT'VE WE JUST CAN'T HANGER AROUND TILL THE OXYGEN RUNS OUT!

AND I CAN'T RECOMMISSION ARDEN! WHY, THE CREW WILL THINK I'VE GONE SOFT!

SO WHAT? MAYBE YOU GOVT TO EASE UP! PEOPLE ALWAYS DOWN ON THEM... SOFTEN THEM! MAYBE YOU SHOULD SOFTEN UP!

I THINK I'VE HEARD ENOUGH, FORREST! THE SHIP IS UNDER MY COMMAND! I MUST MAKE SURE THAT DISCIPLINE IS MAINTAINED! IF IT MEANS BEING HARD ON THE MEN, THEN I'LL BE HARD ON THEM! ARDEN STAYS BROKEN! THAT'S ALL...



VICE-COMMANDER PHILIP FORBES
SLAMMED THE DOOR TO THE CON-
TROL ROOM AFTER HIM AND MUT-
TERED UNDER HIS BREATH...

**SOMEDAY... HUMAN! SOMEDAY
YOU'LL SOFTEN UP!**



AFTER ONE MONTH OF WANDER-
ING... HOPELESSLY LOST, THROUGH
THE VAST VOID OF THE UNCHARTED
GALAXY, SERGEANT COOGAN
ARRIVED...

**I'M SORRY, SIR! I'VE COME BY
BEST! I'VE OMISSIONS AND
NEGLECTED ANDY'S FINGER!
I CAN'T FIND HIS MISTAKE!**



SERGEANT COOGAN OPENED THE
DOOR TO THE ROCKET-MEN'S QUAR-
TERS AND CROSSED TO HIS BUNK.
HE SAT DOWN, HIS HEAD IN HIS
HANDS...

**WHAT HAPPENED? HE HE KILLED
COOGAN? ME OUFF!**

**TRIED... BUT I
COULDN'T DO IT! I
COULDN'T FIND YOUR
MISTAKE! SO HE
KILLED ME!**



AND THEN, THE COMMANDER ANNOUNCED...

**WE HAVE LESS THAN ONE MONTH'S
SUPPLY OF OXYGEN LEFT! STARTING
TODAY, WE'RE CUTTING DOWN UNTIL WE
CAN REPLENISH OUR SUPPLY! WE WILL
BE USING THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM
NEEDED TO SUSTAIN LIFE! YOU WILL
LIMIT YOURSELVES TO ONLY
ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES...**



IT WAS A WEEK LATER... A WEEK OF HUNTING FOR
EACH BREATH... WHEN COOGAN SUDDENLY BROKE
DOWN...

**WE'RE GOING TO DIE!
WE'RE ALL
GOING TO
DIE!**

**COOGAN! TAKE IT
EASY!**



THE ROOM MAN COMPLETELY LOST CONTROL. HE RAVED
HYSTERICALLY UNTIL HE FELL BACK ONTO HIS BUNK
SPORING...

**COUGH COUGH...
BEEP...**

**HE NEEDS AIR! GET
AN OXY-BOTTLE
UP HERE!**



**IT'S COOGAN, SIR! HE'S
HAD A BREAKDOWN! HE
NEEDS AIR! HE'S SHOR-
T! I WANT REALLY
FOR AN OXY-BOTTLE!**

**NEVER MIND! WE
NEED EVERY DROP
OF OXYGEN LEFT ON
BOARD! WE CAN'T
AFFORD TO WASTE
IT ON ONE MAN...**



THEY WATCHED GOSMAN IN THE IRIS HIS HYSTERICAL CONTORTIONS BASKING FOR AIR! FINALLY...



EX-LIEUTENANT ARDEN'S FACE FLUSHED CRIMSON HE SCREAMED AT THE COMMANDER...



BUT ROCKET-MAN ARDEN DIDN'T CALM DOWN! HIS EYES BULED AS HE ROBBED AT THE COM-MANDER...



ROBERT ARDEN PITCHED FORWARD, FACE DOWNWARD... DEAD! THE OTHERS OF THE CREW STAYED AT HIM! THE COMMANDER BARRED AN ORDER...



COMMANDER BERGMAN STALKED OUT OF THE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS! VICE-COMMANDER FORBES STARED AFTER HIM...



THE SHIP WAS ON ITS LAST OXY-GEN BATTLE WHEN IT ENTERED THE STRANGE SOLAR SYSTEM...



THE SHIP ROSE IN TOWARD THE
HUGE PLANET! FASTER... AND
FASTER IT FELL...

SWING 'ER
AROUND! BLAST
OFF! WE'RE
BEING JUCKED
IN TOO FAST!

SHE'S GOT A
TREMENDOUS
GRAVITATIONAL
PULL!



THE REAR ROCKET-TUBES BEGAN
TO FIRE... SLOWING THE SPACE-
CRAFT'S DESCENT...

WE'RE STILL
GOING IN
TOO FAST!

MORE
POWER!
MORE
POWER!



THE S-PULL! IT'S
TOO STRONG!
WE'LL NEVER
BE ABLE TO
STAND IT!

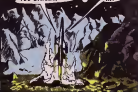
FULL POWER!
WE'RE GETTING
OUT OF HERE!



FULL POWER WAS APPLIED! BUT...

IT'S NO USE! WE CAN'T GET
BACK UP! THE S-PULL IS
TOO STRONG!

WE'RE
GOING
IN!



EVEN WITH FULL POWER ON, THE SHIP SMASHED TO
THE PLANET'S SURFACE HEAVILY...

YAAAAAAGGGH!



INSIDE, ON HIS SHOCK COUCH, COMMANDER BERGMAN
TRIED TO LIFT HIS HEAD... TRIED TO MOVE HIS ARMS!
IT WAS AS IF HE WERE BEING HELD DOWN BY THOU-
SANDS OF POUNDS OF WEIGHT...

UUUNNNNNNNNNNGG!



AND THEN HIS BODY... A BODY NOT ABLE TO WITH-
STAND SUCH A GRAVITATIONAL PULL... JUST
SEEMED TO MELT... SPREADING OUT IN A RED PULPY
POOL OF GOO...



YES! COMMANDER HORACE BERGMAN HAD FINALLY
GONE SOFT!

THE END

FOR SHEER, STARK HORROR, READ THIS TERRIFYING TALE...
GUARANTEED TO JAR YOU OUT OF YOUR SEAT!

SUGAR 'N SPICE 'N...

THEY WERE OUT THERE AGAIN... THE KIDS FROM DOWN THE BLOCK... JOHNNY AND MARGARET! I COULD HEAR THEIR CHILDISH, HIGH-PITCHED VOICES SCUFFLING! I PEERED THROUGH THE CURTAINS AT THEM! JOHNNY WAS THE OLDER OF THE TWO... ABOUT TEN OR ELEVEN! MARGIE, HIS YOUNGER SISTER, WAS NO MORE THAN EIGHT! THE BRIGHTLY COLORED BALL THEY'D BEEN PLAYING CATCH WITH BOUNCED OUT OF THE LITTLE GIRL'S HANDS AND LEAPED OVER THE FRONT FENCE INTO MY FRONT YARD...

CATCH IT, MARGIE!
CATCH IT! OH...

IT... IT WENT
INTO HER
GARDEN!
HOLLY!

I AM AN OLD WOMAN! CHILDREN ALWAYS SEEM TO BE FRIGHTENED BY OLD WOMEN! MARGIE AND JOHNNY WERE ESPECIALLY FRIGHTENED OF ME! THEY CALLED ME THE 'OLD CRAB'! I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE I WAS ALWAYS CHASING THEM FROM FRONT OF MY HOUSE...

WHAT'LL WE
DO?

WE'VE GOT TO GET IT! IT'S
OUR NEW BALL! MOMMY'LL
BE ANGRY WITH US IF WE
LOSE IT!



THE BOY LOOKED AROUND, STARING AT THE HOUSE! I STEPPED BACK FROM THE CURTAINED WINDOW SO HE WOULDN'T SEE ME WATCHING HIM! HE TIP TOED TOWARD THE GATE AND TRIPPED THE LATCH! IT THUNG OPEN, SQUEAKING ON ITS RUSTY HINGES...

SH-HHHH! SHE'LL
HEAR YOU!

MAYBE... MAYBE SHE'S
NOT HOME!



**A HORROR
SUSPENSE STORY**

JOHNNY WAITED A MOMENT, STOOD-
ING THE HOUSE FOR A SIGN OF LIFE!
I STEPPED FURTHER BACK INTO
THE SHADOWS! HE STARTED TO TIP-
TOE UP THE WALK...

YOU KEEP YOUR
EYE OUT FOR
MR. MARSH!

JOHNNY!
JOHNNY!
JOHNNY!

THEY WERE SO OUT! I WANTED
TO EAT THEM UP! JOHNNY CREEPT
TOWARD THE BALL! I WENT TO
THE FRONT DOOR AND... AS HIS
TINY LITTLE, FUDGY FINGERS
CLOSED AROUND THE SPICHTLY
COLORED SPHERE... FLING IT
OPEN...

SO?

SOUP! JOHNNY!
IT'S
HERE!

I STEPPED OUT ONTO THE PORCH,
PUTTING ON MY BEST ANGRYEST
LOOK! I COULD SEE HIS WIDE EYES
FILLING WITH TEARS! MY GRUFF
VOICE THEN SURPRISED ME...

WHAT ARE YOU
DOING IN MY
GARDEN?

W-W-WH-
B-B-BALL!

MR.
JOHNNY!
RUN!

I STARTED DOWN THE STEPS SLOWLY! FOR A MOMENT,
JOHNNY STOOD FROZEN IN FEAR! MARSH STARTED TO
CHIT AND BUBBLED OUT ANOTHER WARNING...

MR. MARSH!
SOB... SOB...
RUN!

JOHNNY TOOK A FLEETING LOOK AT HIS PRECIOUS
RUBBER BALL AND DARTED OUT OF THE YARD...

AND DON'T YOU EVER COME
IN HERE AGAIN! NEXT
TIME, I'LL...

I TOLD
CRAB!

WAAA!
SOOR
FUDGY!

I HAD TO TURN AWAY FROM THEM SO THEY WOULDN'T
SEE ME SMILING! THEY CERTAINLY HAD SPYGLASS,
THOSE TWO! I LIKE KIDS WITH SPIRIT! I BENT
AND PICKED UP THEIR BALL! THEY STOPPED RUN-
NING AND WATCHED...

HEY! YOU DIVE US BACK
OUR BALL OR WE'LL TELL
OUR DADDY!

HERE! COME AND
GET IT!

JOHNNY'S FACE TURNED WHITE! MARSH HAD BEHIND
HIM! THEY CONTEMPLATED MY OFFER...

OH-DEE! YOU HEARTY FELLOW
KNOW IT TO...
US!

ALL RIGHT... IF YOU
DON'T WANT IT...

I TURNED TOWARD THE FENCE, CARRYING THE BALL. I WATCHED THEM OUT OF THE CORNER OF MY EYE! THEY WERE WHISPERING TOGETHER...

THEY TRICKED ME! THEY TOOK IT INSIDE WITH HER!

WHY? TOLD US NOT TO PLAY IN FRONT OF HER HOUSE? SHE'LL SEE IT SERVED US RIGHT!



I CLIMBED THE STEPS SLOWLY, GIVING THEM TIME TO MAKE UP THEIR MINDS...

AIN'T... AIN'T TEN DOLLAR... GIVE US OUR BALL BACK!

COME AND GET IT, IF YOU WANT IT!



JOHNNY SHUFFLED ACROSS THE STREET HESITANTLY? MARGIE STOOD SILENTLY, BITING HER FINGERNAILS...

BOTH OF YOU?

OH-NO! MARGIE!

I'M... I'M SCARED OF HER!



JOHNNY BEGGED MARGIE TO COME WITH HIM, BUT SHE REFUSED! FINALLY, SHE FLED DOWN THE STREET, CRYING...

NO! NO! NO! I'M SCARED! MARGIE! WAIT! SHE... SCARED!



JOHNNY STARTED AFTER HER! HE'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE BALL! I TOSSED IT AT HIM AND CALLED...

HERE! HERE'S YOUR OLD BALL! NOW, STAY OUT OF MY YARD! IN FACT... STAY AWAY FROM ME! IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE!



JOHNNY CAUGHT THE BALL AND SCAMPERED AWAY AFTER HIS SISTER...



I WATCHED THEM FOR A WHILE, AND THEN CLIMBED BACK INTO THE HOUSE...



LITTLE DEVILS! I'LL GET 'EM YET!

THAT'S THE WAY IT HAD BEEN EVER SINCE I'D MOVED INTO THAT OLD HOUSE! I'D BEEN AFTER THOSE TWO IMPS EVER SINCE THE VERY FIRST DAY! AS I WENT BACK INTO THE HOUSE AND SLAMMED THE DOOR, SOMETHING CAUGHT MY EYE! ON THE WALL...THE CALENDAR.



I SPENT THE NEXT DAY GETTING READY FOR HALLOWEEN! EVERY ONCE AND A WHILE I PEERED OUT OF THE WINDOW AND WATCHED THE KIDS ON THE BLOCK SWINGING FROM OLD BARK STOONES FILLED WITH FIGS...



I LISTENED TO THE RUSTY SATE SQUEAK OPEN AS JOHNNY SLEPT UP THE WALL...



... AND PLACED THE FILLED MILK BOTTLE ON THE DOOR STEP, LEANING AGAINST THE DOOR, SO THAT WHEN I'D OPEN IT, IT WOULD TIP IN AND SPILL ALL OVER THE FLOOR...



LITTLE MARIE AND JOHNNY PROBABLY THOUGHT OF IT THE EXACT SAME MOMENT THAT I DID...



BY EVENING, EVERYTHING WAS READY! I WAS SET FOR THEM! AND THEY DIDN'T DISAPPOINT ME! WHEN DARKNESS FELL, I SPIED LITTLE JOHNNY AND MARIE STEALING UP TO THE FRONT GATE...



THEN HE RANG THE BELL...



NATURALLY, I DIDN'T ANSWER! I JUST PEERED OUT, WATCHING THEM WHISPER TOGETHER.

SHE PROBABLY KNOWS IT'S JUST **JOHNNY** RINGING THE BELL! WE'VE GOT TO GET HER TO **OPEN THE DOOR!**

WHAT ABOUT **TICK-TACK-POE?**



THEN, TIED TO THE NUT, THE BOY UNROLLED A SPool OF BLACK THREAD TILL IT STRETCHED BACK DOWN TO REACH THE GATE!

ALL SET? **YEAH! DOOR DOWN!**



JOHNNY PULLED ON THE LONG THREAD FROM THE NUT! THEN HE LET IT GO FORWARD! THE NUT, HANGING FROM THE TACK, CLAPPED AGAINST THE DOOR...



FINALLY, JOHNNY SAWE UP! I COULD SEE THEM WHISPERING TOGETHER.

WAYBE... WAYBE SHE'S NOT HOME.

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT!



EVERYBODY HAS A DIFFERENT NAME FOR **THAT** HALLOWEEN TRICK! JOHNNY AND MARGIE CALLED IT 'TICK-TACK-POE'! JOHNNY SLIPPED BACK UP TO THE FRONT DOOR AND THROWN A THING-TACK INTO IT! FROM THE TACK, HE HUNG A LENGTH OF THREAD WITH A NUT TIED AT THE END...

SH-HH-HH! SOOO WHISPERING!

TEE-HEE! I... YEE-HEE... CAN'T HELP IT!



AGAIN AND AGAIN HE PULLED THE NUT BACK AND LET IT RANG AGAINST THE DOOR! ANYONE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THIS HALLOWEEN PRANK WOULD BE **CRACKY** LISTENING TO THAT INSISTANT TAPPING! BUT I JUST WAITED...



I WATCHED THEM START AWAY... DOWN THE BLOCK... DISAPPOINTED! NOW IT WAS MY CHANCE...

H-HELP!

HEY! WHAT WAS THAT?





SOMEONE
HELP ME...

IT'S THE
OLD
CRAB!
BEEP!

JOHNNY! I'M
SCARED!



MAYBE SHE'S SCARY!
MAYBE SHE'S
DYING!

H-E-C-C-I-N-



LITTLE JOHNNY STARTED BACK
TOWARD MY HOUSE! I CALLED
OUT ONCE MORE.

HELP ME
SOMEONE!

JOHNNY! C'MON!
WHERE
YOU
GOIN'?



JOHNNY SHUFFLED UP THE PORCH
STEPS AND REMOVED THE TILTED
MILK BOTTLE...

YOU ALL RIGHT? HELP
MA'AM! HE
PLEASE!



HE TRIED THE FRONT DOOR! IT WAS
UNLOCKED! I SAW THEIR FRIGHTENED
FACES PEEK IN.

IT... IT'S DARK
IN THERE,
JOHNNY!

MA'AM!
YOU
DEAF?

JOHNNY!



THEY STEPPED INSIDE! THE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT
BEHIND THEM.

BEEP!

HOW?



JOHNNY! E. IT'S
LOCKED!

PULL, MA'AM!
PULL!





NO. 7
FEB.-MAR.



10¢

SHOCK

SUSPENSE STORIES

JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION
IN THE
EC TRADITION!



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1933

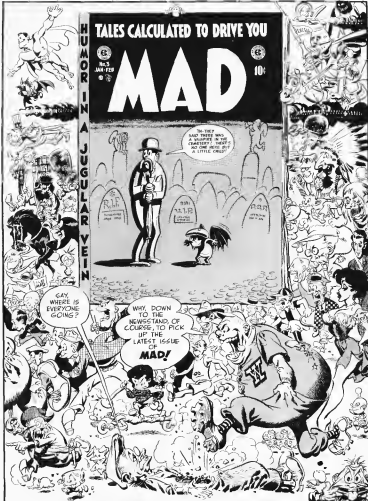
MAD

6
10¢



GAY,
WHERE IS
EVERYONE
GOING?

WHY, DOWN
TO THE
NEWSSTAND, OF
COURSE, TO PICK
UP THE
LATEST ISSUE
OF
MAD!



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THE SHOCKING FINAL TWIST TO THIS
ELECTRIFYING TALE WILL TERRIFY YOU!

BEAUTY AND THE BEACH!

JOHN MILTON LOOKED AROUND UNCOMFORTABLY AT THE MEN WATCHING HIS WIFE MARY! SHE KNELT UPON THE DAZZLING WHITE SAND BEACH, CRITICALLY SURVEYING HER MAKE-UP IN A SMALL COMPACT MIRROR, EACH TURN OF HER CURVACIOUS FIGURE REVEALED INTIMATELY BY THE SCANT TWO-PIECE BATHING SUIT SHE WORE...

MARY! FOR PETE'S SAKE! PUT ON A BEACH-ROBE! THAT THAT BATHING SUIT IS ALMOST OBSCENE! PEOPLE ARE LOOKING AT YOU...

OH, TAKE IT EASY, JOHNNY! I LIKE PEOPLE TO LOOK AT ME! I'VE GOT A NICE FIGURE! WHY SHOULDN'T I SHOW IT OFF?

PERCY FULLMAN WRINKLED HIS NOSE IN DISGUST AS, FROM HIS HIDING PLACE IN THE SHADE OF THE BEACH CHAIR, HE STUDIED HIS WIFE, GINGER! SHE SAT ON THE BLANKET IN THE BLAZING SUN, STROKING HER TANNED ARMS AND SHOULDERS, SPREADING THE TACKY, PERFUMED SUN-TAN OIL OVER THEM...

LET'S GO HOME, GINGER! YOU KNOW HOW I HATE THE BEACH! WE'VE BEEN HERE THREE HOURS ALREADY...

OH, SHUT UP, PERCY! I LOVE THE SUN! I WANT TO GET A GOOD SUN-TAN! READ A BOOK OR SOMETHING, HUH?



**A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY**

THE TWO COUPLES HAD SPREAD THEIR BLANKETS SCARCELY TEN FEET FROM EACH OTHER ON THE CROWDED BEACH! JOHN AND MARY MILTON. SHE SHOWING OFF HER ATTRACTIVE FIGURE, AND HE FUMING, EMBARRASSED AND JEALOUS.

IT ISN'T *NICE*, MARY! I'M YOUR *HUSBAND*! NO ONE SHOULD SEE YOU UNDRESSED LIKE *THAT*... EXCEPT ME.

DON'T BE SO *POSSESSIVE*, JOHN! I'M NOT ONE OF YOUR *STAMP ALBUMS*...



AND GINGER AND PERCY FULLMAN. SHE ADORING THE SUN, BASKING IN IT, AND HE COWERING, FULLY DRESSED, BENEATH THE BEACH CHAIR CANOPY...

GINGER! *PLEASE!* IT'S SO *HOT!* I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN *SIT* OUT THERE SO *LONG!* I'M *SOAKING WET* FROM *PERSPIRATION!*

OH, GO SOAK YOUR *HEAD*, PERCY! NO *WONDER* YOU'RE SO *HOT!* LOOK AT YOU! *SHIRT... TROUSERS... SOCKS... SHOES... HAT!* NO *WONDER*...



BUT, GINGER! I *HAVE* TO DRESS LIKE THIS! YOU *KNOW* WHAT HAPPENS TO ME IF I GET THE *LEAST LITTLE BIT SUNBURNED!*

THEN JUST SUFFER IN *SILENCE*, PERCY! I *WANT* TO GET *SUNBURNED!* I *LOVE* IT...



MARY! I DON'T *LIKE* MEN TO LOOK AT YOU! I CAN JUST *IMAGINE* WHAT THEY'RE *THINKING!*

CAN YOU? WELL, A GIRL LIKES TO KNOW SHE HASN'T LOST HER *APPEAL* TO OTHERS... AND THAT HER *HUSBAND* CAN STILL GET *JEALOUS!*

OH, DEAR! I'M ALL OUT OF *SUNTAN OIL*, PERCY! RUN AND GET ME *ANOTHER BOTTLE*, WILL YOU?

HUH? BUT THE *CONCESSION* IS WAY *OVER THERE!* I'LL HAVE TO WALK IN THE *SUN*...



WHERE ARE THE *KIDS*, MARY? I DON'T *SEE* THEM!

HOW SHOULD I *KNOW*? I *THOUGHT* YOU WERE *WATCHING* THEM!



THERE THEY ARE... DOWN BY THE *WATER!* I'LL *GET* THEM! I... OH, *EXCUSE* ME!

EXCUSE ME! IT WAS *MY FAULT!* I'M *SORRY!*



AND SO JOHN MILTON'S APOPERCY FULLMAN'S PATHS CROSS... THERE ON THAT CROWDED BEACH I WILL THEIR PATHS CROSS AGAIN... AT SOME FUTURE DATE? PERHAPS! LET'S SEE

I BES YOUR PARDON, MA'AM! I I COULDN'T HELP ADMIRING YOUR BEAUTIFUL FACE AND FIGURE! ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF..

LOOK, CHUN! MY HUSBAND DOESN'T LIKE STRANGERS TO LOOK AT ME, NO LESS TALK TO ME!

PLEASE DON'T GET ME *WRONG*, MA'AM! MY NAME IS GEDRIC ABELS! I'M A PUBLICITY MAN! WHAT I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT IS *STRICTLY BUSINESS!*

WELL, YOU'D BETTER TALK *FAST*, MR ABELS! MY HUSBAND WILL BE *BACK* SHORTLY



I COULDN'T HELP *OVERHEARING* YOU TELL YOUR HUSBAND TO BUY A BOTTLE OF 'BRONZE-BURN SUN-TAN OIL,' MA'AM! ALLOW ME TO *INTRODUCE* MYSELF

NICE LINE, MISTER, BUT *NO DICE!* PERCY MAY LOOK PUNY, BUT HE'S GOT A HORRIBLE *TEMPER!*

OH, NO! I'M *NOT*.. WELL... IT ISN'T *THAT* AT ALL! MY NAME IS TOM SIMMENS! I'M A DIRECTOR FOR A BIG ADVERTISING AGENCY! 'BRONZE-BURN' IS OUR *CLIENT!* THIS IS *STRICTLY BUSINESS!*

OH! I'M SORRY WHAT DO YOU *WANT?* A *TESTIMONIAL?*



AND EVERY YEAR, I RUN THE *THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOUSE-WIFE IN AMERICA* CONTEST! DOWN IN OH, I ATLANTIC CITY! NOW COULDN'T I'M SURE, IF YOU THANKS FOR THE ENTERED IT.. *COMPLIMENT..*

BUT JOHNNY WOULDN'T LIKE IT AT ALL!

YOU'D HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING, MRS. MILTON! THINK WHAT IT WOULD *MEAN..*

NOT A *TESTIMONIAL*, MA'AM! I'D LIKE YOU TO BECOME 'THE BRONZE-BURN GIRL!' I'D LIKE TO BUILD A BIG ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN AROUND YOU!

WHY I'M *FLATTERED*, MR. SIMMENS! BUT PERCY..





...TREMENDOUS PUBLICITY, MRS. MILTON! PERHAPS A CHANCE AT A HOLLYWOOD CAREER...

I DON'T KNOW...



...A LOT OF MONEY, MRS. FULLMAN! YOUR PICTURE WOULD BE IN EVERY NATIONAL MAGAZINE!

I DON'T KNOW...



THINK IT OVER MRS. MILTON! HERE'S MY CARD...

THINK IT OVER MRS. FULLMAN! HERE'S MY CARD...



WHO WAS THAT MAN YOU WERE TALKING TO, MARY? I SAW HIM GO AWAY AS I CAME...

HIM? I. I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT WHEN WE GET HOME! C'MON!



I SAW YOU TALKING TO HIM, GINGER! WHO WAS HE?

I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT... BUT NOT NOW! LET'S GO...



THAT NIGHT, IN THE MILTON HOME, AFTER THE CHILDREN WERE PUT TO BED...

WHAT? MY WIFE DISPLAYING HERSELF LIKE A COMMON... A COMMON... I WON'T HAVE IT! I WON'T HAVE MEN STARING AT YOU WHILE YOU PARADE AROUND PRACTICALLY UNDRESSED!

WELL I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU'LL HAVE! IT'S MY BIG CHANGE AND I'M TAKING IT!



WHILE ACROSS TOWN, AT THE FULLMAN RESIDENCE...

GO AHEAD! MAKE A FOOL OF YOURSELF! 'THE BRONZE-BURN GIRL'! 'BAN!' YOU AND YOUR STUPID SUN-BATHING! WELL, DON'T EXPECT ME TO FOLLOW YOU AROUND...

IT'S MY BIG CHANGE AND I'M TAKING IT! AND YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!

SOON AFTERWARD, IN ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY...

AND NOW, THE WINNER OF 'THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOUSEWIFE IN AMERICA' CONTEST... MRS. MARY MILTON...

HOLD IT MRS. MILTON!



WHILE, SOMEWHERE SOUTH, ON A HOT BEACH UNDER THE BLAZING SUN...

TURN YOUR HEAD THIS WAY, MRS. FULLMAN.

SMILE, MRS. FULLMAN!



AT HIS JOB IN A PLASTICS FACTORY...

HEY, MILTON! I SAW YOUR WIFE'S PICTURE IN THE PAPER! YAHOO! SOME FIGURE!

SHUT UP!



AS, ON A BEACH...

THAT'S THE BRONZE-BURN GIRL! AND THAT'S HER HUSBAND...

HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S ENJOYING HIMSELF!



DADDY! WHEN IS MOMMY COMING HOME?

SOON, CHILDREN! SOON! NOW, EAT YOUR DINNER!



I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER, GINGER! EVERY DAY... OUT IN THE HOT SUN! I CAN'T STAND IT!

I'M MAKING MORE MONEY NOW THAN YOU'LL EVER MAKE... SO YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO STAND IT! I'M NOT GIVING IT UP!



WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'RE ONLY HOME FOR A FEW DAYS?

MR. ABELS WANTS ME TO GO ON TOUR! THERE ARE FOUR BEAUTY CONTESTS OUT WEST HE WANTS ME TO ENTER!



A MONTH WENT BY! TWO. FOUR! GINGER FULLMAN MOVED AROUND THE COUNTRY, ADVERTIZING BRONZE-BURN SUN-TAN OIL! AND PERCY FULLMAN WAS FORCED TO GO WITH HER...

IT'S HOT, GINGER! I CAN'T TAKE IT!

IT'S WONDERFUL!

HOLD IT, MRS. FULLMAN!

MARY MILTON WON BEAUTY CONTEST AFTER BEAUTY CONTEST! AND JOHN MILTON WAS FORCED TO STAY HOME AND LOOK AFTER THEIR CHILDREN

IT'S MOMMY'S PICTURE, DADDY! LOOK! WHEN'S SHE COMING HOME, DADDY?

DISGUSTING! EXPOSING HERSELF LIKE A COMMON TRAMP! SOON, CHILDREN! SOON!



FINALLY...

FOR SIX MONTHS YOU'VE DRAGGED ME AROUND FROM BEACH TO BEACH OUTIN THE BURNING SUN! WELL I'M THROUGH! THROUGH, DO YOU HEAR?

OH, COOL OFF, PERCY! I LOVE THE SUN!

YOU'RE COMING HOME WITH ME, GINGER! YOU'RE FINISHED WITH SUN-BATHING...

NO! I'M STAYING! I'M GOING ON BEING THE BRONZE-BURN GIRL! I LIKE IT...

ALL RIGHT, GINGER! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT...



WHILE... NO! I WON'T LET YOU GO AWAY AGAIN! I WON'T LET YOU MAKE A SPECTACLE OF YOURSELF!

OH, CAN IT, JOHNNY! PEOPLE ADMIRE BEAUTY! THEY ADMIRE ME!

YOU'RE STAYING HOME WITH ME, MARY! YOU'RE THROUGH RUNNING AROUND HALF NAKED... MEN STARING AT YOU...

NO! I'M GOING ON YOUR AGAIN! I LIKE BEING STARED AT!

ALL RIGHT, MARY! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT...





GINGER FULLMAN STOPPED AS SHE CAME THROUGH THE DOOR TO THE NEXT ROOM...



WHAT ARE THEY... YOU'LL SEE...
ON THE CEILING? MY DEAR!
LIGHTS?

THEN, THE ROOM WAS FILLED WITH SCREAMS AS PERCY CAUGHT GINGER AND TIED HER TO A TABLE...



PERCY! LET ME GO!

YAAAAAAA AH!

FOR THE ROOM WAS SUDDENLY FILLED WITH A BLINDING LIGHT... HOT AND WHITE...

NOT EXACTLY LIGHTS, GINGER!
SUN LAMPS!
FORTY OF THEM!



WHEN MR. CEDRIC ABELS CAME TO CALL THE NEXT MORNING TO TAKE HER ON ANOTHER TOUR, JOHN USHERED HIM INTO THE LIVING ROOM! THERE, ENCASED IN A BLOCK OF CLEAR PLASTIC, GROTESQUELY PRESERVED IN ITS DEATH THROES, HUNG THE TWISTED BODY OF MARY MILTON...

NOW SHE CAN BE... EH... EH...
ADMIRER... EH... EH... ALWAYS!



GOOD LORD!

AND WHEN MR. TOM SIMMENS CAME TO CALL THE NEXT MORNING TO TAKE HER OUT TO ANOTHER ADVERTISING STUNT, PERCY USHERED HIM INTO THE LIVING ROOM! THERE, UNDER THE BATTERY OF NOW-COOL SUNLAMPS, CRISPLY TOASTED TO A BRONZE-BROWN, LAY THE BLISTERED BODY OF GINGER FULLMAN...

SHE NEVER... EH... EH... COULD GET
ENOUGH... EH... EH... SUN!



CHOKER!

THE END

YOU'LL BE JOLTED OUT OF YOUR SEATS BY THE
SOLID IMPACT OF THIS GRIPPING NARRATIVE!

THE BRIBE!

INSPECTOR FRANK WILSON OF THE CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STOOD IN THE FOYER OF THE BLUE SWAN CLUB SURVEYING THE NOISY, SMOKEY SCENE BEFORE HIM! THE TABLES, CROWDED TOGETHER, WERE ALL OCCUPIED! THE TWO-BY-FOUR EXCUSE FOR A DANCE FLOOR WAS JAMMED WITH GYRATING COUPLES, EACH PRESSED TOGETHER IN AN INTIMATE ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW THE SENSUOUS RHYTHMS OF THE RHUMBA ORCHESTRA! HERE AND THERE, A STRUGGLING WAITER PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE MELEE, CARRYING AN ORDER TO HIS STATION! THE WHOLE SCENE WAS ONE OF UTTER CONFUSION! THE HEADWAITER SHOOK HIS HEAD...

SORRY, SIR!
WE'RE ALL
FILLED UP...

I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A
TABLE! WHERE'S
THE OFFICE...



**A SHOCK
SUSPENSE STORY**

THE HEADWAITER POINTED ACROSS THE LAUGHTER AND THE SMOKE TO A DOOR MARKED 'PRIVATE'! INSPECTOR WILSON PUSHED HIS WAY TOWARD IT! THE BRASSY ORCHESTRA EXPLODED INTO A SAMBA TEMPO AS HE FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR...

HEY! S'MATTER, BUB?
CAN'T YUH READ? THAT
DOOR SAYS 'PRIVATE'!
THAT MEANS KNOCK...

YOU WOULDN'T HAVE
HEARD ME IF I'D'VE
EXPLODED A BOMB
OUT THERE! ER, WHO'S
IN CHARGE? WHO
OWNS THIS PLACE?



WHO'S
ASKIN'?

FRANK WILSON FIRE
DEPARTMENT VIOLATIONS
INSPECTOR...



THE MAN SEATED BEHIND THE EXPENSIVE LOOKING SHINY DESK SHOT A QUICK GLANCE AT THE MAN STANDING BESIDE HIM...

ER... AH... WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER INSPECTOR... FOSTER, I THINK HIS NAME WAS?

TRANSFERRED UPTOWN! THIS IS MY TERRITORY NOW! YOU'VE GOT A NICE SIZE GROUND OUT THERE TONIGHT, MR... MR...



CUSKO! NICK CUSKO! YEAH! ER... NICE GROUND...

WHAT'S THE LAWFUL CAPACITY ALLOWED FOR YOUR PLACE, MR. CUSKO?



HOW SHOULD I KNOW! TREE... FOUR HUNDRED!

THREE OR FOUR HUNDRED... IN THIS PLACE? THEN, YOU MUST HAVE SEVERAL EXITS...

YOU CAME THROUGH IT.

YOU MEAN THERE'S ONLY ONE EXIT...

LOOK, INSPECTOR! I GOT A NICE BUSINESS HERE! DON'T GO MAKING THINGS DIFFICULT FOR ME, HUH? I'M SURE YOU CAN BE... ER... SATISFIED!

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW FOSTER ALLOWED YOU TO STAY OPEN! IT'S A DIRECT VIOLATION OF THE FIRE LAWS...



WHY DON'T YOU TALK TO FOSTER, INSPECTOR! MAYBE... MAYBE HE HAD HIS REASONS!

I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO REVOKE YOUR LICENSE, MR. CUSKO! I DON'T CARE WHAT FOSTER'S REASONS WERE! THE FACT STILL STANDS...

NOW, LET'S NOT DO ANYTHING RASH, INSPECTOR!

I'M SORRY, GENTLEMEN! THE LAW STRICTLY REQUIRES THAT THERE BE ADEQUATE EXITS PROVIDED IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE AMOUNT OF PATRONS TO BE ACCOMMODATED...

GET WISE, WILSON! FORGET WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN HERE TONIGHT! WE'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOU! JUST NAME YOUR PRICE...



INSPECTOR WILSON SLAMMED THE DOOR TO THE BLUE SWAN CLUB'S PRIVATE OFFICE AND STOOD OUTSIDE IN THE NOISE AND THE SMOKE, BREATHING HARD...

THE DIRTY @#%!X?S!
OFFERING ME A...BRIDE!



HE LOOKED AROUND, MENTALLY CALCULATING THE AMOUNT OF CUSTOMERS JAMMED INTO THE SMALL BASEMENT NIGHTCLUB...

THERE MUST BE FIVE HUNDRED PEEPLE IN HERE...AT LEAST! FIVE HUNDRED PEEPLE, AND ONLY ONE EXIT!



THEN, HE PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD AND UP THE STAIRS OUT INTO THE COOL NIGHT AIR! THE TINNY MUSIC OF THE BLUE SWAN'S RHUMBA BANG DRIFTED OUT BEHIND HIM...

...AND FOSTER! IT'LL MEAN CURTAINS FOR HIM WHEN I REPORT THIS IN! THE FOOL! THE STUPID FOOL!



A GENTLE SOBBING FILLED THE APARTMENT AS INSPECTOR WILSON OPENED THE DOOR! HE SNAPPED ON THE LIGHT! JEAN, HIS TWENTY YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, LOOKED UP FROM HER PROSTRATE POSITION ON THE COUCH! TEARS SPILLED OUT OF HER RED EYES AND DOWN HER CHEEKS...

JEANNIE! HONEY!
WHAT IS IT?

OH, DADDY! SOB
DADDY...



SHE CLUMPS TO HIM, HER BODY QUIVERING! HE SOOTHED HER...COMFORTED HER! WILSON HAD BEEN BOTH MOTHER AND FATHER TO JEAN EVER SINCE HIS WIFE HAD DIED...

IT...IT'S TED'S FAMILY!
SOB! THEY WANT A...SOB...
BIG WEDDING!

BUT, JEANNIE! YOU
YOU KNOW WE
CAN'T AFFORD...



I...I KNOW, DADDY!
I TRIED TO TELL
THEM! TED UNDER-
STANDS! BUT...SOB...
SOB...THEY DON'T!

NOW, STOP YOUR CRYING,
BABY! WE'LL WORK OUT
SOMETHING! I'LL BORROW
THE MONEY! WE'LL WORK
IT OUT...



THE ANGRY RINGING OF THE DOOR BELL EXPLODED THROUGH THE APARTMENT...

NO! I WON'T LET YOU
GO INTO HOCK FOR THE
REST OF YOUR LIFE FOR
SOMETHING I DON'T THINK
IS THAT IMPORTANT, I
TOLD TED THAT...OH!

I WONDER WHO
THAT CAN BE THIS
TIME OF NIGHT?
MAYBE IT'S YOUR
YOUNG MAN! BETTER
GO IN AND TIGHTEN
YOUR FACE...



BUT THE MAN OUTSIDE THE DOOR WAS NOT JEAN'S FIANCEE! IT WAS...

HELLO, FRANK! NICK TOLD ME YOU WERE IN THE BLUE SWAN TONIGHT! I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU, FRANK. BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING!

NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT, FOSTER! I'VE GOT TO REPORT 'EM! THAT'S ALL THERE IS...



THEY'VE BEEN PAYING OFF, FRANK! YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO BE KICKED OFF THE FORGE... WOULD YOU? THAT'S WHAT IT WOULD MEAN IF YOU MADE YOUR REPORT!

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? IT'S YOUR HEADACHE! YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE YOU ACCEPTED THEIR MONEY!



LOOK, FRANK! THEY PAID ME A C-NOTE A MONTH. THAT'S OVER A GRAND A YEAR! FIGURE IT OUT FOR YOURSELF! ADD THAT TO WHAT THE CITY PAYS YOU...

MY DAUGHTER'S INSIDE, FOSTER! KEEP IT LOW!

IT'S EASY MONEY, FRANK! YOU JUST LOOK THE OTHER WAY... THAT'S ALL!

A GRAND! THAT'S A LOT OF MONEY! THAT COULD MAKE AN AWFULLY NICE WEDDING.

HUH? WHAT ABOUT A WEDDING?

N-NOTHING! ER. LOOK, FOSTER! LET ME THINK ABOUT IT, EH? I'LL LET YOU KNOW!



FRANK WILSON CLOSED THE DOOR AND STOOD THINKING A MOMENT! JEAN CAME OUT OF THE BEDROOM, SMILING...



HE LOOKED DOWN AT HIS LOVELY DAUGHTER...

EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, JEANNIE! YOU CAN TELL YOUR YOUNG MAN'S FAMILY THAT THERE WILL BE A BIG WEDDING... THE BIGGEST THEY'VE EVER SEEN!

OH, DADDY! DADDY!



THE NEXT DAY, FRANK WILSON...
INSPECTOR...FIRE DEPARTMENT...
WENT TO SEE NICK GUSKO...

NOW YOU'RE USING
YOUR HEAD, WILSON!
SAME ARRANGE-
MENT AS FOSTER?

NOT
EXACTLY,
GUSKO! I
WANT NINE
ALL IN ONE
LUMP! A YEAR'S
PAYMENTS!



YOU CRAZY?
SUPPOSE YOU
GET TRANS-
FERRED AND
SOME OTHER
EAGER-BE-AVER
HAS TO BE BOUGHT
OFF! I'M PAYING
DOUBLE!



THAT'S THE
CHANGE YOU'LL
HAVE TO
TAKE, GUSKO!
THAT'S MY
DEAL! TAKE
IT...OR...

NICK GUSKO GOT TO HIS FEET, WENT
TO A SMALL FLOOR SAFE, AND
REMOVED...

HERE Y'ARE,
WILSON!
1200 BUCKS!

THANKS, GUSKO!



ARRANGEMENTS FOR JEAN'S WEDDING WERE MADE!
THE DATE WAS SET! ONE NIGHT...

WELL, YOUNG LADY!
DON'T YOU LOOK PRETTY!
GOING OUT ON THE TOWN
TONIGHT WITH TED?

UH-HUH! HE'LL BE
HERE IN A MOMENT!
OH-OH! THERE HE
IS NOW!



THEY WERE GONE! FRANK GLANCED AT THE MANTEL
CLOCK! IT WAS ALMOST NINE! HE YAWNED AND
STRETCHED...

HO, HUM! I'M TIRED T'NIGHT!
GUESS I'LL HIT THE HAY EARLY!



READY,
HONEY?

READY, TED, DARLING!
G'NIGHT, DADDY!

GOOD-NIGHT, KIDS!
HAVE A GOOD
TIME!



[IT SEEMED TO FRANK THAT HE'D ONLY BEEN
ASLEEP A SHORT TIME WHEN HE WAS SUDDENLY
AWAKENED BY A SCREAMING WAIL! FAR BELOW, ON
THE STREET, A FIRE-ENGINE SHRIEKED BY, ITS
SIREN BLASTING...]

HUH? OH! YAWN! FIRE...
SOMEWHERE! WHAT TIME IS
IT, ANYWAY? HMMM! TWELVE-
THIRTY! HO, HUM...



AND THEN THE PHONE BY THE BED BEGAN TO RING ANXIOUSLY...

H-HELLO? HELLO, FRANK? THIS IS FOSTER! BETTER GO DOWN HERE... QUICK! IT'S THE BLUE SWAN! IT'S ON FIRE! IT'S HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE! THERE MUST BE SIX HUNDRED PEOPLE TRAPPED INSIDE... CHOKO...



IT WAS LIKE A NIGHTMARE FOR WILSON, DRESSING AND SPEEDING ACROSS TOWN! WHEN HE ARRIVED...

FOSTER! WHAT HAPPENED? OH, LORD...

THEY WERE LIKE ANIMALS! ONLY FIVE OR SIX PEOPLE GOT OUT! THEY'RE OVER THERE... BURNED HORRIBLY! THE REST... THE REST... YOU... YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD IT... THE CRYING... THE SCREAMING...



THE FIVE SURVIVORS WERE QUESTIONED! ONE OF THE SURVIVORS TOLD INSPECTOR WILSON, BETWEEN GASPS OF PAIN, WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

IT WAS DURING THE SHOW! THEY HAD SOME JUGGLER! HE JUGGLED LIT TORCHES! THE CURTAIN CAUGHT! THEY STAMPEDED TOWARD THE EXIT... BLOCKING IT... BEHIND ME...



THEY BEGAN TO BRING OUT THE CHARRED BODIES! ONE AFTER THE OTHER...

THERE'LL BE AN INVESTIGATION, FOSTER! THEY'LL FIND OUT! OH, LORD! WHAT HAVE I DONE? I'VE MURDERED THEM... ALL OF THEM!

SHUT UP, YOU FOOL! SOMEONE WILL HEAR YOU!



ALL NIGHT LONG, THEY BROUGHT THEM OUT! THE COVERED BODIES LINED THE SIDEWALK LIKE WHITE GRIVES. A POLICE CAPTAIN APPROACHED WILSON...

WILSON! I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU!

SURE... DONALDSON!



THE POLICE CAPTAIN DREW WILSON ASIDE...

WE WERE WORKING ON IDENTIFYING THE VICTIMS, FRANK! THE GIRL WHO WANDERS AROUND PHOTOGRAPHING THE CUSTOMERS OFFERED TO HELP! SHE ALWAYS TAKES THE PICTURES BEFORE THE SHOW, AND DEVELOPS THEM IN HER SHOP DOWN THE BLOCK! AFTER THE SHOW, SHE'D DELIVER THEM! SHE HAD A BIG BATCH! PICTURES OF PEOPLE WHO... WHO DIED IN THERE! SHE HAD... THIS ONE!



CAPTAIN DONALDSON HELD UP A SHINY PHOTOGRAPH...

JEANNIE! OH, GOD... JEANNIE! SHE WAS THERE TONIGHT!



INSPECTOR FRANK WILSON...FIRE DEPARTMENT...STAGGERED AWAY FROM THE CHARNAL SCENE, CLUTCHING THE GLOSSY PICTURE IN HIS SHAKING FIST...



WILDLY, HE MADE HIS WAY BACK TO THE APARTMENT...



HE DREW THE GUN FROM HIS NIGHT TABLE DRAWER! HE LIFTED IT...STARING INTO THE BLACK MUZZLE.



THE GUNSHOT ECHOED THROUGH THE DARK APARTMENT! THE BODY PITCHED FORWARD, SPRAWLING ANKWARDLY ON THE BEDROOM FLOOR...



THE TELEPHONE BEGAN TO RING! ITS INSISTANT JANGLE VIBRATED UPON DEAD EARS...



FAR AWAY A WOMAN AT A SWITCH-BOARD TURNED TO THE YOUNG COUPLE...

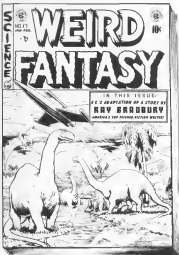


JEANNIE LOOKED AT TED...HER EYES SPARKLING WITH HAPPINESS.



E.C. FANS!

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OF OUR SCIENCE - FICTION
MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...**



**ANOTHER
"NEW TREND"**

ENTERTAINING COMIC!



**ON SALE NOW
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!**

THE MOUNTAIN JACKAL

Tajik Kabal, the lawless Afghan chieftain, had sacked Border villages, burned colonial stations, and filled the mountain passes with bodyless heads and headless bodies for four unlettered years!

Kabal's roaming fanatics didn't stay long in one district, if that was any consolation to the Anglo-Indian outposts that guarded the Hurram Hills. For a time, it seemed that Kabal's murderous raids and rampages had ceased. The British certainly hoped that Kabal had become arm-weary from swinging his deadly, double-edged, three-foot sword! Some expressed the hope that he had packed his band of cut-throats off to Russia, or even China—judging by their hardy endurance and the range they covered. But it soon became known that Tajik Kabal was settling down right in the Hurram Hills! He was building a great citadel there, a great store-house for the loot he had already amassed and a great garrison from which to strike forth and amass more ill-gotten gains!

Tajik Kabal's biggest mistake was in choosing the site for his fortress. It was in the same district as Her Majesty's Fort Saint Patrick! The fort was so-called because its complement was composed mainly of the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars.

Seventy soldiers of F Company left the fort one early morning to attend a surprise "house-warming" at Tajik Kabal's! Their favorite bhut, young Jenga Shah, slapped the water-filled goatskin bag slung at his side in rhythm with the hooves of the plodding ammunition-mules.

The siege was a short one! Seventy Martin rifles formed a perimeter around Kabal's unfinished fortress and advanced upon it in an ever-tightening circle. A few of the besieged Snider rifles expressed a difference of opinion but were promptly quoted by the out-spoken Martins. And when the smoke cleared, there were still seventy British soldiers—and twenty less Pathan fanatics!

Six of the wisest Irish troopers provided a personal escort for Tajik Kabal. His line fig-

are towered a head above the Celtic guards that flanked him. But the aquiline profile of Tapk Kabal betrayed neither hope nor despair. He sorely missed his ornate Damascus blade, wrought of the finest tempered steel, for it had been like a third arm to him. The soldiers had given it to their faithful water-carrier, Jenga Shah, to carry back to the fort.

And as the triumphant war party weaved through the twisting passes that bottled up the torturous afternoon sun, all the joys of victory left Jenga Shah's heart! Jenga Shah, the orphan, recognized the flashing sword that he carried! Three years ago, this same sword had cleaved his loved ones from him and Tapk Kabal, the Mountain Jackal, had done the wielding! One thousand nights ago, Kabal's raiders had set upon his village, backed away his household, and made him an orphan fleeing in the protective mantle of night!

It was night at Fort Saint Patrick! Tapk Kabal was already succumbing to the lonely confines of his dungeon. Then the water-carrier came to him, quietly and with a key!

He told Kabal that he would whistle like a bird as a signal that he had lured the trusting prison guard to the far side of the courtyard on some pretense. Then Kabal must open the cell door, let himself out of the prison, run for the nearest wall where a ladder would be propped in the shadows, and scale it to freedom! Kabal was bewildered but grateful!

Within the hour, a shrill whistle came from the other side of the courtyard! Tapk Kabal let himself out of his cell, slipped off his sandals, ran out of the unguarded prison, and padded noiselessly through the dark. The wall loomed before him! He could make out the ladder's shape, now!

With one great bound, he aimed his bare feet for the third rung, reaching his fingers forward to grasp a top-most rung simultaneously! All his weight was upon the rungs when he felt his fingers sliced away and his feet impaled to the bones on the bottom rung!

Too late, Tapk Kabal learned that "He who lives by the sword, dies by the sword!" The rungs of the ladder were imbedded razor-sharp bayonets!



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SHOCK TALK

If we may wax serious, this issue, we'd like to bring to your attention a condition existing in the comic industry of which you are probably not aware! As you know, we have always considered you, our readers, more than mere customers—rather we have considered each and every one of you an integral part of the E.C. family. Accordingly, we have attempted to play things straight with you, and have brought our problems to you as they arise. The problem that we now face is a very serious one! Every few years, the comic industry collapses! The last big collapse was early in 1950. Several publishers went out of business, most others dropped titles, changed titles, or temporarily suspended operations. At that time, we at E.C. completely retooled our line, and started from scratch with our new trend—comics. For the last three years, you readers have been good to us! We have prospered, grown, and now publish 10 bi-monthlies. We were highly successful in horror, science-fiction, and then in war comics. Our success led to other publishers loading the stands with their horror, s.f., and war comics, loading the stands to extent that in September 1952, there were over 500 different comic magazines being published! An incredible total—an impossible total! Although more comic magazines are being sold to day than ever before, the total sales cannot support 500 titles. So the inevitable happened! Last March, the comic industry began to collapse again under the weight of this impossible number of titles. As this writing (early October), the field is filled with rumors of publisher after publisher either going out of business or dropping titles! Money is being lost in great gobs by virtually everyone in comics! Why are we troubling you, our readers, with all this? Two reasons first, to thank you! E.C. is a small outfit, as comic outfits go. Our capital reserve is relatively small. If IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE FAITHFUL ISSUE

AFTER ISSUE BUYING HABIT OF YOU READERS, E.C. WOULD HAVE GONE DOWN THE DRAIN! For this—your loyalty and continued readership—we earnestly and sincerely thank you. As V.K. would put it, "We're all choked up!" Secondly, we are telling you all this because we want to ask a favor. There are STILL over 500 titles on the stands, and will be for some months! (It takes time to drop a title!) Thus far, although we're losing money on some of our titles, E.C. is standing firm, and we are continuing to publish all 10 magazines! The favor? Simply this: KEEP BUYING E.C. MAGAZINES! Please don't misunderstand! We don't want a single reader to spend a single dime that he needs for anything important on an E.C. mag. But if you're PLANNING to spend that dime on a comic mag, make it an E.C.! More than ever before, we need your business! WE NEED YOUR BUSINESS TO STAY IN BUSINESS!

Before closing just a word about RAY BRAD BURY. America's top horror and s.f. writer—who, as most of you probably know by now, has given E.C. permission to adapt some of his best stories. Mr. B.'s fascinating horror tale, THE SMALL ASSASSIN, appears in this issue. Subscriptions to any E.C. mag will set you back 75c. per issue. Half year's supply—6 months' envelopes. Please keep sending your letters simultaneously inspire us and keep us on our toes to give you the best! Address for mail and subscription is:

The Editors
Shock SuspenStories
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New York 12, N. Y.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY TITLE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 21, 1912 AS AMENDED BY TITLE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1909 AND JULY 3, 1960. Title 49, United States Code, Section 270a of TITLE 49, SUBSECTION (b) (1) (A) (i) New York, N. Y. For October 1, 1952.

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Timm Tot Comics Inc., 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y.; Editor, Albert B. Feidstein, 22, Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y.; Managing Editor, William M. Gaines, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y.; Business manager, Frank D. Lee, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y.

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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semi-weekly, and tri-weekly newspapers only.)

(Signed) FRANK D. LEE, Business Manager

Signed to and subscribed before me this 4th day of September, 1952

Ettore De Stefano, Notary Public. (My commission expires March 30, 1954.)

BRACE YOURSELVES FOR THE STARTLING WIND-UP
TO THIS SCIENCE-FICTION YARN!

INFILTRATION



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSE STORY

WHEN I ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON, D.C., I REPORTED DIRECTLY TO COLONEL WAYNE SHAW IN THE PENTAGON BUILDINGS! HE READ MY LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION CAREFULLY... THEN LOOKED ME OVER...

HMMM! YES! WELL, I THINK YOU'LL DO *NICELY*, MISS CURTISS! I'VE BEEN *NEEDING* A PRIVATE SECRETARY FOR SOME TIME NOW, AND YOU'RE JUST THE ONE TO FILL THE JOB!

THANK YOU, COLONEL! CAN YOU *BRIEF* ME ON JUST WHAT WORK THE GROUP HAS *ACCOMPLISHED* SINCE...



COLONEL SHAW GLANCED AROUND UNCOMFORTABLY AS I QUESTIONED HIM! HE BECKONED TO ME AND I DREW CLOSER...

WE'VE GOT TO BE *VERY CAREFUL*, MISS CURTISS! ALL OF THE WORK WE'VE *DONE*... ALL OF OUR *PROGRESS* TO DATE... IS IN *GREAT DANGER*! I SUSPECT THAT OUR GROUP HAS BEEN *INFILTRATED*!

YOU... YOU MEAN THAT THERE IS AN *ALIEN* AMONG US?



EXACTLY! SO YOU MUST BE ON GUARD AT ALL TIMES!

I UNDERSTAND, COLONEL!

THIS MAY COME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE TO YOU, BUT DO YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS A GOVERNMENT BUREAU WORKING IN COOPERATION WITH THE ARMY, NAVY, AND F.B.I., SPECIFICALLY FORMED FOR THE PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATING AND FERRETING OUT MARTIAN INVADERS? COLONEL SHAW HEADS THAT BUREAU...

AND NOW, MISS CURTISS, THANK YOU, SIR! IF YOU'LL COME WITH ME, I'LL INTRODUCE YOU AROUND!

IT IS A SMALL GOVERNMENT AGENCY...TOP SECRET! WITH THE APPEARANCE OF THE FLYING SAUGERS, THE THOUGHT THAT POSSIBLY AN UNDERCOVER INVASION WAS TAKING PLACE PROMPTED FORMATION OF THE BUREAU...

GENTLEMEN THIS IS THE BUREAU'S NEW SECRETARY! MISS CURTISS!

HY, MISS CURTISS!

GLAD TO MEET YOU, MA'AM!

MR. BRADY! I WONDER IF YOU WOULD BE KIND ENOUGH TO GIVE MISS CURTISS A BRIEF RESUME OF THE BUREAU'S HISTORY...

GLAD TO, COLONEL! LEAD THE WAY, MR. BRADY! MISS CURTISS? WILL YOU COME WITH ME?

AS MR. BRADY LED ME INTO THE FILE ROOM, I REMEMBERED COLONEL SHAW'S WARNING ABOUT BEING ON GUARD AT ALL TIMES! I RESOLVED TO MEASURE EVERY WORD I SPOKE...

AS YOU KNOW, MISS CURTISS, THE ARMY BELIEVES THAT FLYING SAUGERS MAY BE BRINGING MARTIANS TO EARTH AND LANDING THEM HERE!

...AND THAT THEY MAY BE INFILTRATING GOVERNMENT, POLITICS AND BUSINESS! YES, I KNOW THAT...

...THAT THEY ARE COMPLETELY ALIEN IN FORM BUT, DUE TO A PROTECTIVE HYPNOTIC SCREEN WHICH THEY SURROUND THEMSELVES WITH, APPEAR AS HUMAN BEINGS!

MR. BRADY! I'VE BEEN THROUGH BASIC TRAINING! WHAT ABOUT THE AGENCY'S PROGRESS?

THESE ARE THE FILES OF ALL REPORTS DIRECTED TO THIS BUREAU CONCERNING POSSIBLE MARTIAN INVADERS! EACH REPORT IS CAREFULLY CHECKED!

AND SO FAR, NO PROOF HAS BEEN FOUND THAT MARTIANS EXIST!

CORRECT! EACH REPORT HAS BEEN FOLLOWED... ANALYZED... THE SUSPECTED INDIVIDUAL CHECKED... AND CLEARED!

SO WE ARE COMPARATIVELY SAFE...

SAFE, MISS CURTISS? NO! I DON'T THINK SO!

BUT YOU SAID ALL SUSPECTS HAVE BEEN CLEARED! DOESN'T THAT MEAN WE'RE SAFE?

THEY'RE GLEVER, MISS CURTISS! VERY GLEVER! WHY, I SUSPECT ALIENS HAVE INFILTRATED THIS VERY ORGANIZATION!

I'D BEEN ON GUARD! NOW, I BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF...

YES! I KNOW!

YOU KNOW? BUT HOW COULD YOU?

COLONEL SHAW WARNED ME THAT AN ALIEN WAS AMONG US! I'M SO GLAD IT'S NOT YOU, MR. BRADY! I...

PHIL! CALL ME PHIL! I'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU OUT TONIGHT, MISS CURTISS... IF YOU'RE NOT BUSY...

NOT MISS CURTISS, PHIL! BETTY! WHY, I'M NOT BUSY AT ALL TONIGHT! MAYBE WE CAN GO SOMEWHERE QUIET... AND... YOU KNOW... LET DOWN OUR HAIR A LITTLE!

SAY... I'D LIKE THAT! FRANKLY, I'VE BEEN ON EDGE LATELY! I DON'T KNOW WHY!

I UNDERSTAND! IT'S THIS CONSTANT PRESSURE! IT'LL DO YOU GOOD TO RELAX A LITTLE! NOW, HOW ABOUT GOING ON WITH THE BRIEFING!

SURE, BETTY! BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH MORE TO IT! THAT'S ABOUT THE WHOLE WORKS!

THE BRIEFING OVER, I LEFT MR. BRADY AND RETURNED ONE MORE TO COLONEL SHAW'S OFFICE...

WELL, MISS CURTISS? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR MR. BRADY?

HE'S NICE, COLONEL! OF COURSE I DON'T KNOW HIM THE WAY I'D LIKE TO.



I DON'T THINK YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW HIM AT ALL, MISS CURTISS!

HE SEEMS NICE! HE ASKED ME OUT TONIGHT!



DID YOU NOTICE ANYTHING STRANGE ABOUT BRADY, MISS CURTISS?

STRANGE? NO! OH... HE DID MENTION THAT HE KNEW OF THE ALIEN IN OUR MIST!



HAH! THAT'S A LAUGH! HE SHOULD KNOW! HE'S THE ONE! HE'S THE ALIEN!

BRADY?! OH, NO! I I HOPE I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING! BUT... THEN THEY KNOW ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION!



BRADY IS WORKING ALONE, MISS CURTISS! THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION, YET! YOU SAY THAT HE SUSPECTS THERE IS AN ALIEN IN OUR MIST?

YES! THAT'S WHAT HE SAID! I... THAT'S RIGHT! HE DID SAY THAT!



WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST, MISS CURTISS! HE KNOWS SOMETHING! WE'VE GOT TO BRING THIS THING TO A SHOWDOWN... TONIGHT!

I'M GOING OUT WITH HIM TONIGHT!



GOOD! NOW THIS IS WHAT WE'LL DO! YOU ACT AS THOUGH YOU TRUST HIM... GO OUT WITH HIM! THEN... TOWARDS MIDNIGHT...



THAT NIGHT...ALTHOUGH I WAS EXTREMELY NERVOUS...I WENT OUT WITH OUR 'ALIEN MR. BRADY'

IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT,
PHIL! HOW ABOUT GOING
BACK TO MY PLACE?

SOUNDS SWELL TO
ME, BETTY! I'LL
HAIL A CAB



THE CAB TOOK US ACROSS WASHINGTON TO MY APARTMENT HOUSE! AS I UNLOCKED MY APARTMENT DOOR...

SAY! NICE PLACE YOU'VE
GOT HERE, BETTY!

I LIKE IT FOR AN
EARTH APARTMENT!



EARTH APARTMENT?
WHAT'S THE GAG,
HON?

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M
TALKING ABOUT, MR.
BRADY! YOU'RE NOT ONE
OF US! YOU'RE ONE OF
THEM...ONE OF THE ALIENS!



HE STARED AT ME FOR A MOMENT...

WHAT A FOOL
I'VE BEEN!

YES, MR. BRADY! A FOOL!
OH, I WOULDN'T TRY ANYTHING!
THIS IS A VERY POTENT
EARTH AUTOMATIC!



I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED, WHEN
YOU TOLD ME THAT COLONEL
SHAW SUSPECTED AN ALIEN
AMONG YOU... I SHOULD HAVE
REALIZED THAT HE
MEANT ME!

YES, MR. BRADY!
YOU WEREN'T
VERY CLEVER!
WE REASONED
EXACTLY THE
SAME WAY!



COLONEL SHAW CAME OUT OF THE BEDROOM...

ONLY WE REASONED
FIRST, MR. BRADY!
TOO BAD!

HE'S ALL
YOURS, SIR!

WHAT WHAT
ARE YOU
GOING TO
DO TO ME?





HERE IS A TALE OF TENSION WITH SHEER HORROR
IN ITS BLOOD-CURDLING CLIMAX!

THE SMALL ASSASSIN!

JUST WHEN THE IDEA OCCURED TO HER THAT SHE WAS BEING MURDERED SHE COULD NOT TELL. THERE HAD BEEN LITTLE SURLY SIGNS, LITTLE SUSPICIONS FOR THE PAST MONTH, THINGS AS DEEP AS SEA TIDES IN HER. BUT NOW THE ROOM FLOATED AROUND HER IN AN EFFLUVIUM OF HYSTEMA. SHARP INSTRUMENTS HOVERED AND THERE WERE VOICES AND PEOPLE IN STERILE WHITE MASKS. SHE WAS ALONE WITH THOSE SILENT WHITE PEOPLE AND THERE WAS GREAT PAIN AND NAUSEA AND DEATH-FAIR IN HER, AND SHE THOUGHT TO HERSELF...

I AM BEING MURDERED BEFORE THEIR EYES!
THESE DOCTORS, THESE NURSES DON'T REALIZE
WHAT HIDDEN THING HAS HAPPENED TO ME! DAVID
DOESN'T KNOW! NO ONE KNOWS EXCEPT ME...
AND... THE KILLER, THE LITTLE MURDERER,
THE SMALL ASSASSIN!



A HORROR SUSPENSTORY
ADAPTED FROM A TALE BY
RAY BRADBURY

FOOTSTEPS. GENTLE, APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS. THE SOUND OF PEOPLE TRYING TO BE QUIET. AN ODOOR OF TWEEDS, A PIPE, A CERTAIN SHAVING LOTION. SHE KNEW DAVID WAS STANDING OVER HER AND BEYOND, THE IMMACULATE ODOOR OF DR. JEFFERS. AND SHE THOUGHT TO HERSELF...

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET THE MURDERER, DAVID? WOULD YOU?

ALICE? ARE YOU AWAKE?



ALICE OPENED HER EYES. THE ROOM CAME INTO FOCUS. MOVING A WEAK HAND, SHE PULLED ASIDE THE COVERLET. THE 'MURDERER' LOOKED UP AT DAVID WITH A SMALL RED-FACED, BLUE-EYED CALM.

WHY... WHY HE'S A FINE BABY, ALICE!



DR. JEFFERS WAS WAITING FOR DAVID THE DAY HE SHOWED UP AT THE HOSPITAL TO TAKE HIS WIFE AND NEW CHILD HOME. HE MOTIONED DAVID INTO A CHAIR IN HIS OFFICE, SAT ON THE EDGE OF HIS DESK, AND LOOKED DAVID STRAIGHT IN THE EYE...



YOUR WIFE DOESN'T LIKE HER CHILD, DAVID?

WHAT?!

DR. JEFFERS CONTINUED...

IT'S BEEN A HARD THING FOR HER. THE WHOLE THING. SHE'LL NEED A LOT OF LOVE IN THIS NEXT YEAR. I DIDN'T MENTION IT AT THE TIME, BUT SHE WAS HYSTERICAL IN THE DELIVERY ROOM. I WON'T REPEAT WHAT SHE SAID. ALL I'LL SAY IS THAT SHE FEELS ALIEN TOWARD THE CHILD. IS...IS THIS CHILD A WANTED CHILD, DAVID?



YES! YES! IT'S A 'WANTED' CHILD. IT WAS PLANNED. WE PLANNED IT TOGETHER! ALICE WAS SO HAPPY A YEAR AGO WHEN...

IT MUST BE SOMETHING ELSE, THEN! PERHAPS SOMETHING BURIED IN HER CHILDHOOD. IN ANY CASE, IF SHE SAYS ANYTHING ABOUT... WELL... ABOUT WISHING THE CHILD HAD BEEN BORN DEAD, SMOOTH IT OVER, WILL YOU, SON?



SUPPERTIME... SOMETIME LATER, DAVID HAD BROUGHT THE CHILD FROM THE NURSERY, PROPPED HIM AT A TINY, BEMILDERED ANGLE, SUPPORTED BY MANY PILLOWS, IN A NEWLY PURCHASED HIGH CHAIR...



HE'S NOT HIGH-CHAIR SIZE YET, DAVID!

FUN HAVING HIM HERE, ANYWAY. EVERYTHING'S FUN, AT THE OFFICE, TOO. HEY, LOOK AT JUNIOR, WILL YOU? DROOLING ALL DOWN HIS CHIN.

DAVID REACHED OVER TO DAB AT THE BABY'S CHIN WITH HIS NAPKIN. FROM THE CORNER OF HIS EYE, HE REALIZED THAT ALICE WASN'T EVEN WATCHING. HE FINISHED THE JOB AND WENT BACK TO HIS FOOD...



I GUESS IT WASN'T VERY INTERESTING. BUT, ONE WOULD THINK A MOTHER'D TAKE SOME INTEREST IN HER OWN CHILD, WOULDN'T ONE?

DON'T SPEAK THAT WAY! NOT IN FRONT OF HIM! LATER IF YOU MUST!

AFTER DINNER ALICE LET DAVID CARRY THE BABY UPSTAIRS. WHEN HE CAME DOWN, SHE WAS STANDING BY THE RADIO, LISTENING TO MUSIC SHE WASN'T HEARING...



DAVID, DOES... DOES A BABY KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG?

NO, BUT IT WILL LEARN. WHY? WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT?

SUDDENLY ALICE STOPPED. HER ARMS DROPPED AND SHE TURNED SWIFTLY.



THAT NOISE! IN THERE! IN THE LIBRARY! WHAT WAS IT?

HUH? I DIDN'T HEAR!

DAVID CROSSED THE ROOM, OPENED THE LIBRARY DOOR, AND SWITCHED THE LIGHTS ON AND OFF...

NOT A THING. YOU'RE ...
TIED G'MON TO BED
WITH YOU... **RIGHT NOW!**

FORGIVE ME, DAVID.
I... I AM EXHAUSTED.



TURNING OUT THE LIGHTS TOGETHER, THEY WALKED QUIETLY UP THE SOUNDLESS HALL STAIRS, NOT SPEAKING. ALICE PAUSED, UNDECIDED, BY THE BEDROOM DOOR, THEN, FINGERING THE BRASS KNOB SHARPLY, WALKED IN. DAVID WATCHED HER APPROACH THE CRIB MUCH TOO CAREFULLY, LOOK DOWN, AND STIFFEN AS IF SHE'D BEEN STRUCK IN THE FACE...



DAVID REACHED THE CRIB AND LOOKED DOWN. THE BABY'S FACE WAS BRIGHT RED AND VERY MOIST. BRIGHT BLUE EYES STARED AS IF BEING STRANGLED OUTWARD...



DAVID UNDRESSED SILENTLY AND SAT ON THE EDGE OF THE BED. SUDDENLY, HE SNAPPED HIS FINGERS

DARN IT! I FORGOT
TO TELL YOU! I
HAVE TO FLY
TO CHICAGO,
FRIDAY!

OH, DAVID! SO
SOON! I... I'M
AFRAID TO BE
ALONE!



HE WAS IN BED NOW. SHE DARKENED THE ROOM. HE HEARD HER WALK AROUND THE BED, THROW BACK CRISP SHEETS, AND SLIDE IN...



I'VE PUT OFF
THIS TRIP FOR
TWO MONTHS.
I JUST HAVE
TO GO.

BUT I'M AFRAID!
YOU... YOU WOULDN'T
BELIEVE ME IF
I TOLD YOU! I
GUESS I'M CRAZY!

BEFORE HE COULD ANSWER... BEFORE HE COULD TELL HER HOW SILLY IT WAS, ALICE SWITCHED ON THE BED LIGHT, ABRUPTLY...



THE BABY LAY WIDE AWAKE IN ITS CRIB, STARING STRAIGHT AT THEM WITH DEEP SHARP BLUE EYES - THE EYES CLOSED. THE LIGHT WENT OUT AGAIN - SHE TREMBLED AGAINST HIM...

IT'S NOT NICE BEING AFRAID OF
THE THING YOU BIRTHED - BUT HE
TRIED TO KILL ME! HE LIES THERE
LISTENING TO US TALKING, WAITING
FOR YOU TO GO AWAY SO HE CAN TRY
TO KILL ME AGAIN! I SWEAR IT!

PLEASE! STOP
IT! STOP IT!
PLEASE!



THE AIRPLANE WENT EAST WITH DAVID. THERE WAS A LOT OF SKY, A LOT OF CLOUDS, AND THEN CHICAGO CAME RUNNING OVER THE HORIZON. DAVID WAS DROPPED DOWN INTO A RUSH OF ORDERS, CONFERENCES, PLANNING, BANQUETING, AND THEN, ON HIS SIXTH DAY AWAY, HE RECEIVED A LONG DISTANCE PHONE CALL.

ALICE? NO, DAVE. THIS IS DR. JEFFERS SPEAKING. HOLD ONTO YOURSELF, SON. ALICE IS SICK! YOU'D BETTER GET THE NEXT PLANE HOME. IT'S PNEUMONIA! I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN, BOY. IF ONLY IT WASN'T SO SOON AFTER THE BABY! SHE NEEDS STRENGTH!



AFTER DOCTOR JEFFERS LEFT, ALICE CONFIDED IN DAVID...

IT WAS THE BABY, AGAIN, DAVID. I TRIED TO LIE TO MYSELF. CONVINCE MYSELF I'M A FOOL. BUT THE BABY KNEW I WAS WEAK FROM THE HOSPITAL. SO HE CRIED ALL NIGHT. AND WHEN HE WASN'T CRYING, HE'D BE TOO QUIET. IF I SWITCHED THE LIGHT ON, HE'D BE THERE, STARING AT ME.



ONE NIGHT, AFTER THE BABY'S CRIB WAS MOVED TO THE NURSERY, ALICE WAKENED, TREMBLING, AND SLID INTO HER HUSBAND'S ARMS.

THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE ROOM... WATCHING US! OH, HONEY! YOU'RE JUST DREAMING!



THE AIRPLANE WENT WEST AND CALIFORNIA CAME UP AND OUT OF THE TWISTING CIRCULAR METAL OF PROPELLERS CAME A VIBRATING SUDEN MATERIALIZATION OF ALICE LYING IN BED, DR. JEFFERS STANDING AT THE WINDOW, AND THE REALITY OF DAVID BEING THERE A LAST...

THE BABY WOULDN'T SLEEP. I THOUGHT HE WAS SICK. HE JUST LAY IN THE CRIB STARING. LATE AT NIGHT, HE'D CRY. LOUD. HE'D CRY ALL NIGHT AND ALL NIGHT. I COULDN'T QUIET HIM. I COULDN'T SLEEP!



THE NEXT MORNING, DAVID WENT TO SEE DR. JEFFERS AND TOLD HIM THE WHOLE THING, AND LISTENED TO JEFFERS' TOLERANT REPLIES...

SO ALICE HATES THE BABY! THE BEST WAY TO PUT IT IS THAT SHE HAS AN OBSESSION. A CEASARIAN OPERATION BROUGHT THE CHILD INTO THE WORLD, AND ALMOST TOOK ALICE OUT OF IT. SHE BLAMES THE CHILD FOR HER NEAR-DEATH AND HER PNEUMONIA. WE ALL DO IT. WE STUMBLE INTO A CHAIR AND CURSE THE FURNITURE, MISS A GOLF STROKE AND BLAME THE CLUB...



HE HELD HER UNTIL SHE FELL ASLEEP AGAIN. THEN HE HEARD THE BEDROOM DOOR SWAY OPEN A FEW INCHES. THERE WAS NOBODY AT THE DOOR. NO REASON FOR IT TO COME OPEN. NO WIND...



HE WAITED. IT SEEMED LIKE AN HOUR HE LAY SILENTLY, IN THE DARK. THEN, FAR AWAY, WHILING LIKE SOME METEOR DYING IN THE VAST INKY GULF OF SPACE, THE BABY BEGAN TO CRY IN HIS NURSERY...



CAREFULLY DISENGAGING ALICE'S GRIP, HE SLIPPED OUT OF BED, PUT ON HIS SLIPPERS, ROBE, AND TIPPED OUT OF THE ROOM TO THE STAIRS. THE BLACKNESS DROPPED OUT FROM UNDER HIM. HIS FOOT SLIPPED ON SOMETHING SOFT...SLIPPED AND PLUNGED INTO NOTHINGNESS...



THE NEXT DAY WENT UNEASILY. HE KEPT SEEING ALICE ALL THE TIME, MIXED INTO EVERYTHING HE LOOKED AT. SO MUCH OF HER FEAR HAD COME OVER TO HIM NOW. SHE ACTUALLY HAD *HIM* CONVINCED THAT THE CHILD WAS SOMEWHAT UNNATURAL...

WHAT...WHAT IF I TOLD ALICE ABOUT THAT *TOY* I STUMBLED OVER LAST NIGHT? LORD, WOULDN'T *THAT* SEND HER OFF INTO HYSTERICS! NO, I WON'T TELL HER ABOUT THAT. IT WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT!



THAT NIGHT, DAVID TOOK A TAXI HOME, AS HE WALKED SLOWLY UP THE CEMENT WALK, ENJOYING THE LIGHT THAT WAS IN THE SKY AND THE TREES, THE WHITE COLONIAL FRONT OF THE HOUSE LOOKED UNNATURALLY SILENT AND UNINHABITED...



HE THRUST HIS HANDS OUT, CAUGHT FRANTICALLY AT THE RAILING. HIS BODY STOPPED FALLING. HE HELD. HE CURSED. THE 'SOMETHING SOFT' THAT HAD CAUSED HIS FEET TO SLIP, RUSTLED AND THUMPED DOWN A FEW STEPS AND STOPPED. HIS HEAD RANG. HIS HEART HAMMERED AT THE BASE OF HIS THROAT, THICK AND SHOT WITH PAIN. HE PICKED IT UP. HIS HAND FROZE, STARTLED. HIS BREATH WENT IN. HIS HEART HELD ONE OR TWO BEATS. THE THING HE HELD IN HIS HAND WAS A *TOY*...A LARGE GUMBERSOME, PATCHWORK DOLL HE'D BROUGHT AS A JOKE FOR...



ONCE INSIDE, HE PUT HIS HAT ON THE CHAIR WITH HIS BRIEFCASE, STARTED TO SHRUG OFF HIS COAT, THEN LOOKED UP...



LATE SUNLIGHT STREAMED DOWN THE STAIR-WELL FROM THE WINDOW AT THE TOP OF THE HOUSE... ILLUMINATING THE PATCHWORK DOLL THAT SPRAWLED IN A GROTESQUE ANGLE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS.



ALICE LAY IN A BROKEN, PALLID GESTURING AND ANGLING OF HER THIN BODY. SHE WAS LYING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS, LIKE A CRUMPLED DOLL WHO DOESN'T WANT TO PLAY ANY MORE... EVER. ALICE WAS DEAD.



HE HELD HER IN HIS ARMS. BUT SHE WOULDN'T LIVE. SHE WOULDN'T TRY TO LIVE. HE SAID HER NAME OUT LOUD MANY TIMES, BUT IT DIDN'T HELP. SHE WAS DEAD!

HE MUST HAVE MADE A PHONE CALL. HE DIDN'T REMEMBER. HE FOUND HIMSELF SUDDENLY, UPSTAIRS, STARING AT THE CRIB. THE BABY'S EYES WERE CLOSED, BUT HIS FACE WAS RED, MOIST WITH PERSPIRATION...



THEN HE STARTED LAUGHING, LOW AND SOFT AND CONTINUOUS FOR A LONG TIME, UNTIL DR. JEFFERS WALKED OUT OF THE NIGHT-TIME AND SLAPPED HIM AGAIN AND AGAIN ACROSS HIS CHEEKS...



IT WAS ELEVEN AT NIGHT. A LOT OF STRANGE PEOPLE HAD COME AND GONE THROUGH THE HOUSE, TAKING THE ESSENTIAL FLAME WITH THEM... ALICE, DAVID SAT ACROSS FROM THE DOCTOR IN THE LIBRARY...



DAVID SHOOK HIS HEAD...

ALICE HEARD THINGS AT NIGHT. THINGS MOVING IN THE HALLS, AS IF SOMEONE SPIED ON US. YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT THOSE NOISES WERE, DOC? I'LL TELL YOU. THEY WERE MADE BY THE BABY! YES, MY SON! FOUR MONTHS OLD, CREEPING AROUND THE DARK HALLS AT NIGHT...

I WANT YOU TO STOP THIS, DAVID!



WHAT DO WE KNOW OF BABIES, DOCTOR? THE GENERAL KNOWLEDGE, YES. YOU KNOW OF COURSE, HOW BABIES KILL THEIR MOTHERS AT BIRTH WHY? IN RESENTMENT AT BEING FORGED INTO THIS LOUSY WORLD! BEING FORGED TO VAGABOND FROM THE PEACE AND SAFETY OF ITS...

DAVID! YOU'RE ALL WRONG! I...



MANY INSECTS ARE SELF-SUFFICIENT WHEN THEY'RE BORN. IN A FEW DAYS, MOST MAMMALS AND BIRDS ARE ADJUSTED. LITTLE MAN-CHILDREN TAKE YEARS TO SPEAK, FALTERING ON RUBBERY LEGS. BUT, SUPPOSE ONE CHILD IN A MILLION IS... STRANGE! BORN PERFECTLY AWARE, ABLE TO THINK INSTINCTIVELY!

BDSH!



WOULDN'T IT BE A PERFECT SET-UP, A PERFECT BLIND FOR ANYTHING THE BABY MIGHT WANT TO DO? HE COULD PRETEND TO BE ORDINARY. WITH JUST A LITTLE EXPENDITURE OF ENERGY, HE COULD CRAWL AROUND A DARK HOUSE, LISTENING. HOW EASY TO CRY ALL NIGHT AND FIRE A MOTHER INTO PNEUMONIA. HOW EASY TO PLACE OBSTACLES AT THE TOP OF STAIRS. HOW EASY, RIGHT AT BIRTH, TO BE SO CLOSE TO THE MOTHER THAT A FEW DEFT MANEUVERS MIGHT CAUSE PERITONITIS... DEATH!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, DAVID! WHAT A REPULSIVE THING TO SAY!



MY LITTLE BOY BABY, LYING IN HIS CRIB NIGHTS, HIS FACE MOST AND RED AND OUT OF BREATH. FROM CRYING? NO! FROM CLIMBING TECHNICALLY, AGH-INGLY SLOW, OUT OF HIS CRIB, FROM CRAWLING LONG DISTANCES THROUGH DARKENED HALLWAYS. MY LITTLE BOY BABY. I WANT TO KILL HIM...SOB

YOU'RE NOT KILLING ANYONE! YOU'RE GOING TO SLEEP FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS SLEEP WILL CHANGE YOUR MIND. HERE, TAKE THESE PILLS...



THE NEXT MORNING, DOCTOR JEFFERS RETURNED AND LET HIMSELF IN. SOMEONE WAS GOING TO HAVE TO LOOK AFTER THE BABY. THERE WAS AN ODOOR OF GAS IN THE HOUSE. JEFFERS RAN UP THE STAIRS, CRASHED INTO DAVID'S ROOM...



COUGH...COUGH...

DAVID LAY ON THE BED, NOT MOVING. THE ROOM FILLOWED WITH GAS WHICH HISSED FROM AN UNLIT HEATER ON THE FLOOR NEAR THE OODR...

DR. JEFFERS WALKED TO THE NURSERY. THE OODR WAS CLOSED. HE OPENED IT AND WALKED INSIDE AND OVER TO THE CRIB. THE CRIB WAS EMPTY...

THE NURSERY OODR BLEW SHUT. YOU COULDN'T GET BACK TO YOUR CRIB. YOU DIDN'T PLAN ON THE DOOR BLOWING SHUT



HE OPENED HIS MEDICAL BAG...

A LITTLE THING LIKE A SLAMMED DOOR CAN RUIN THE BEST OF PLANS. WELL, I'LL FIND YOU SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE, HIDING. PRETENDING TO BE SOMETHING YOU ARE NOT!



DAVID DRANK DOWN THE PILLS AND LET HIMSELF BE LED UPSTAIRS TO HIS BEDROOM, CRYING, AND FELT HIMSELF BEING PUT TO BED. THE DOCTOR SAID GOOD-NIGHT AND LEFT THE HOUSE. DAVID, ALONE, DRIFTED TOWARD SLEEP. A NOISE...



WHA...WHAT'S THAT...

SOMETHING MOVED IN THE HALL? DAVID SLEPT...

DAVID WAS DEAD. THE BODY WAS COLD. IT HAD ONLY BEEN DEAD A FEW HOURS...



HE...COUGH...HE COULDN'T HAVE TURNED THE GAS ON HIMSELF! THOSE SEDATIVES HAD KNOCKED HIM OUT! HE WOULDN'T HAVE WAKENED TILL NOON! BUT, BUT...

SOMETHING RUSTLED DOWN THE HALL. SOMETHING SMALL AND VERY QUIET. JEFFERS CAME OUT OF THE NURSERY...

I HAD TO OPERATE TO BRING YOU INTO THIS WORLD. NOW I GUESS I CAN OPERATE TO TAKE YOU OUT OF...SEE, BABY? SOMETHING BRIGHT! SOMETHING SHINY!



A SCALPEL...

-THE END-

7

AL FELDSTEIN: *A signature is a signature, and you shouldn't ask anyone to do someone else's handwriting.*

Al Feldstein's exuberantly brutal cover for **Shock #7** was so immediate in its impact that some readers were left wondering "what was going on." They got a partial explanation in the letters page of #9, but what was really "going on" was that Feldstein was at the height of his powers as a writer/editor and knew it. The blistered, screaming face of a man struck by lightning, his back turned to his own reflection, is an apt introduction – *Caveat lector!* – to the second year of **Shock's** run.

"Beauty and the Beach" is a highpoint in the remarkable series of lead stories which Feldstein, working from Bill Gaines's springboards, scripted and laid out for Jack Kamen. Feldstein's success with this series is a tribute to his rapport with Gaines (who used the lead stories in **Shock**, beginning with "The Neat Job," to venture into areas of personal feeling previously unexplored in comics) and to his ability to anticipate how Kamen would visualize and dramatize his scripts. "Beauty and the Beach" shapes one of Gaines's pet themes – the milquetoast husband married to a vain, ambitious wife – into a deftly-balanced parallel narrative. Pages 4 and 6 are fine examples of Feldstein's emphatically symmetrical page layouts and Kamen's dynamic compositions and spillover effects coming together to create lucid and elegant comics.

"The Bribe" is memorable chiefly for its in-depth portrayal of Inspector Frank Wilson, the first believable villain in a **Shock** preachie since Lieutenant Staley in "Confession" (**Shock #4**). It is also noteworthy that Wallace Wood depicts Wilson as a solid-burgher type – he is virtually a dead ringer for Murray Voorhes in "So Shall Ye Reap" (**Shock #10**) – instead of the stock Corrupt Official from central casting.

Considering Bill Gaines's very mixed feelings about young children – "Halloween" (**Shock #2**) and "Sugar 'n Spice 'n" (**Shock #6**) are representative of his attitude – it is not hard to understand why Ray Bradbury's fantasies about children as an alien, malevolent life form would appeal to him. The subtle and oppressive mood of horror that pervades EC's adaptation of "The Small Assassin" is largely the result of George Evans's sensitive artwork: almost every panel has a strong horizontal emphasis, we see the sky only in a few brief glimpses on page 6, and every image of the baby or his crib is genuinely terrifying. Surprisingly, Evans was never given another Bradbury story to illustrate.

– William Mason

BAD 1950s EC COMICS!

IMPACT



**NO. 8
JUNE**



**200
245
CANADA**

SHOCK

SUSPENSTORIES

**JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION
IN THE
TRADITION!**



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PIECEMEAL

THE BLOOD-GURDLING SCREAMS THAT HAD FILLED THE NIGHT HAD FADED NOW, AND THE SILENCE HAD CLOSED IN ONCE MORE. ERIC STAGGERED ACROSS THE LUSH LAWN TOWARD THE HOUSE, SOBBING. THE FULL MOON BATHED HIM IN ITS COLD LIGHT, SHIMMERING OVER HIS WHITE WET BODY. HE WAS GLAD IN BATHING TRUNKS AND STREAMS OF SCARLET DOZED FROM THE SLASHES IN HIS PALE FLESH. IN HIS RIGHT HAND, ERIC CLUTCHED A BLOOD-SOAKED TOWEL, PRESSING IT AGAINST THE SHREDDED STUMP OF HIS LEFT ARM...

SIDNEY **KNEW** HE **KNEW**...
ALL THE TIME! WE...
WE UNDERESTIMATED
HIM!



**A HORROR
SUSPENSE STORY**

ERIC STUMBLED ONTO THE FLAG-STONE PATIO AND FLUNG HIMSELF AGAINST THE DOOR, POUNDING IT WITH HIS RED-STAINED FIST. INSIDE, THE HOUSE WAS SILENT. NO ONE STIRRED. OF COURSE NOT! HE AND SALLY HAD SEEN TO THAT...



THE HOUSE WAS STILL. THE POUNDING GREW WEAK. ERIC SLID TO THE COLD PATIO, HIS HEAD WHIRLING. THE BLACK VELVET CURTAIN OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS BEGAN TO FALL, SHUTTING OUT THE NIGHT, SHUTTING OUT THE MOONLIGHT. A POOL OF BLOOD FLOODED OUT OVER THE NEATLY LAID FLAGSTONES...



THERE WAS ONLY STILLNESS NOW. THE QUIET STILLNESS OF NUMBED SENSES. ERIC TRIED TO FIGHT OFF THE BLACKNESS BUT IT STUBBORNLY GLUNG TO HIM, DRIVING THE SIGHT FROM HIS EYES, THE PAIN FROM HIS AMPUTATED ARM. AND THEN, HE COULD SEE SALLY...COMING TOWARD HIM...OUT OF THE BLACKNESS. LOVELY...YOUNG...SALLY...



ERIC... DARLING...

SUDDENLY, THE BLACKNESS WAS GONE. THE MOONLIGHT SPARKLED ON THE SURFACE OF THE POOL WATER. SALLY STOOD BEFORE HIM, HER YOUNG FULL BODY REVEALINGLY ENGAGED IN A BATHING SUIT...



SIDNEY! IS HE...?

ASLEEP! I GAVE HIM THE PILLS AND HE WENT OFF LIKE A BABY. HE WON'T BOTHER US...

AND THEN SHE WAS IN HIS ARMS, AND HE WAS HOLDING HER CLOSE, HIS LIPS SEARCHING FOR HERS, FINDING THEM, AND FEELING OF THEIR SOFTNESS...



SALLY, BABY! ERIC... MY SWEET...

HOW MANY TIMES HAD THEY MET LIKE THAT, THERE, BY THE POOL, IN THE DARKNESS? HOW MANY TIMES HAD THEY KISSED, AND HELD EACH OTHER, THEN PLAYFULLY DIVED INTO THE WARM STILL WATER?...



HOW MANY TIMES? HOW HAD IT ALL STARTED? THE POOL FADED. THE DARKNESS CLOSED IN AGAIN. THEN ERIC SAW HIMSELF STANDING BEFORE HIS ELDER BROTHER'S PALATIAL HOUSE... SUITCASE IN HAND...



ERIC! ERIC, YOU SURPRISE, OLD SON OF A GUN! SIDNEY! I WAS PASSING THROUGH TOWN BETWEEN JOBS AND THOUGHT I'D LOOK YOU UP!

SIDNEY HAD BEEN DELIGHTED TO SEE HIM, AND THEN, SALLY CAME OUT OF NOWHERE AND ERIC SAW HER, AND THE WHOLE WORLD WENT TOPSY-TURVY...



SALLY DEAR! THIS IS THE KID BROTHER I'VE TOLD YOU SO MUCH ABOUT! THIS IS ERIC! ERIC... MY WIFE... SALLY!

HELLO, ERIC!

SALLY...

THAT WAS THE START OF IT. THEY HAD LOOKED AT EACH OTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME AND IT HAD HAPPENED. LIKE A TIDAL WAVE RUSHING ACROSS A TINY TROPICAL ISLE... ENGULFING...



SIDNEY WROTE ME ABOUT YOU, SALLY, BUT I NEVER EXPECTED THIS! YOU'RE VERY LOVELY.

HE SPOKE ABOUT YOU AS THOUGH YOU WERE A CHILD, ERIC. I... I HAD PICTURED YOU SO DIFFERENTLY...

AND THEN, DINNER THAT FIRST NIGHT... AND ERIC STEALING GLANCES AT SALLY SEATED OPPOSITE HIM... THEIR EYES MEETING WHILE SIDNEY CHATTED AIMLESSLY...

AFTER DINNER I MUST SHOW YOU MY MARINE COLLECTION, ERIC. I'VE RECENTLY ACQUIRED SOME RARE SPECIMENS!

HUH? OH! SURE, SIDNEY! SURE!



SIDNEY... THE NATURALIST... THE EXPERT ON UNDERSEA FLORA AND FAUNA. THE SHELF-LINED LIBRARY WITH ITS MYRIAD OF GLOWING TANKS...

AMAZING, SIDNEY! WHERE DO YOU GET THEM? I MEAN, THESE FISH...

THEY'RE SHIPPED TO ME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, ERIC! THIS IS THE MOST VALUABLE COLLECTION IN THE STATES! AND NEXT MONTH...



SIDNEY... RANTING ABOUT HIS COLLECTION... ABOUT NEW ADDITIONS... FUTURE SHIPMENTS! AND ALL THE WHILE HE PRETENDED TO BE LISTENING, ERIC WAS STUDYING SALLY... VIVACIOUS SALLY...

...THE ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND IN CAPTIVITY. I'D SAY IT'S WORTH ROUGHLY SIX HUNDRED DOLLARS!

YOU... YOU LOOK TIRED, ERIC! COME, SIDNEY! LET'S LET ERIC GO TO BED! I'LL SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM, ERIC!



SHE MOVED AHEAD OF HIM, UP THE THICKLY CARPETED STAIRS. HE WATCHED HER TRIM FIGURE GLIDE ALONG THE HALL AND OPEN THE GUEST-ROOM DOOR...

I BROUGHT YOUR THINGS UP ALREADY! NOPE YOU DON'T MIND!

NOT AT ALL, SALLY! THANKS!



HE BRUSHED PAST HER AND THEY TOUCHED, AND HE BREATHED DEEPLY, INHALING HER WOMAN SMELL AND THE PERFUME IN HER HAIR...

SIDNEY... HAS TROUBLE SLEEPING. I HAVE TO GIVE HIM SLEEPING PILLS!

OH?



HE STOOD OVER HER, LOOKING DOWN INTO HER SOFT EYES, AT HER FULL LIPS...

WE HAVE A SALT-WATER POOL OUT BACK! I USUALLY TAKE A DIP AT NIGHT AFTER HE'S ASLEEP! PERHAPS YOU...

I'LL JOIN YOU! I'D LOVE IT!



AND WHEN SHE'D GONE, HE STOOD AT THE WINDOW AND STARED OUT AT THE QUIET POOL LYING LIKE A MIRROR IN THE DARKNESS. UNTIL SHE'D COME OUT OF THE HOUSE AND LOOKED UP AT HIS WINDOW AND WAVED...



MOMENTS LATER, HE SLIPPED DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT INTO THE COOL NIGHT AIR, HIS FLESH TINGLED AS HE APPROACHED THE POOL. SALLY STOOD THERE IN HER SUIT, EACH CURVE OF HER EXCITING FIGURE ACCENTED AND DEFINED...



DO YOU SWIM, ERIC?

A LITTLE!

THEN THEY WERE IN THE WATER, THE WARM POOL WATER... STILL HOLDING THE HEAT OF THE DAY. AND THEY WERE SWIMMING... AND LAUGHING...



WHAT ABOUT SIDNEY?
I MEAN... WELL...

SIDNEY'S OUT LIKE A LIGHT! WITH THOSE PILLS HE TAKES, THE HOUSE COULD COLLAPSE AND HE WOULDN'T HEAR IT...

AND LATER, SITTING AT THE POOL EDGE, SUCKING ON CIGARETTES, AND WHISPERING...



WHY DID YOU MARRY HIM, SALLY? HE'S TWICE YOUR AGE!

I DON'T KNOW. PERHAPS HE OFFERED ME SECURITY...

...THE DIM LIGHT FROM THE HOUSE, FALLING ON HER FACE, REFLECTING IN HER HAIR...

...AND SO YOU'VE HAD ALL YOU WANTED, EH? IS THAT THE STORY?

YES, ERIC! UP TILL TODAY, THAT IS!



...THE TIDAL WAVE RUSHING HEAD-
LONG...



SALLY!

ERIC...

... LEAVING IN ITS WAKE, AFTER ITS FURY IS SPENT, ONLY RUIN AND SADNESS...



I. I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT, SALLY! I SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE OUT HERE!

BUT YOU DID COME, ERIC! AND NOW THERE'S NO RETURN! WE'VE FOUND EACH OTHER!

AND SIDNEY?
WHAT ABOUT HIM?
WHAT WILL WE TELL HIM? HE...

WE'LL TELL HIM NOTHING! AT LEAST, NOT YET! LET'S JUST WAIT AWHILE! LET'S WORK THIS OUT. YOU'LL STAY ON WITH US. WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING!



SO ERIC HAD STAYED. HE COULDN'T HELP HIMSELF. BEAUTIFUL SALLY! DESIRABLE SALLY! LIVING A LIE.



SIDNEY UNPACKED THE CAREFULLY CRATED CAN. HE EMPTIED IT INTO A WAITING TANK. A SINGLE MULTI-COLORED FISH...



THE INTERMINABLE DAYS... WITH SIDNEY, WHILE HE FUTTERED AROUND THE LIBRARY, FEEDING HIS COLLECTION OF SEA LIFE...



AND THOSE ALL TOO SHORT NIGHTS BY THE POOL... WITH SALLY...



THE SHOCKING REVELATION OF WHAT SALLY WAS PLANNING...



YES! BUT *MURDER*...



OH, SALLY...



THE MADNESS OF IT. THE SHEER HORROR OF WHAT THEY PLANNED TO DO? AND THOSE NIGHTS, IN THE POOL, WITH THE WORLD AND SIDNEY SO FAR AWAY...

HE EXPECTS HIS SHIPMENT TOMORROW. SOME RARE FISH. I'LL TELL THEM HE COULDN'T SLEEP! HE TOOK TOO MANY PILLS.

HOW WILL YOU...?



AND THEN, THIS EVENING...SITTING AT DINNER...

THE DOORBELL! I'LL GET IT! IT'S PROBABLY FOR ME! MY SHIPMENT...

ALL RIGHT, DEAR!



I'LL GIVE HIM HIS USUAL AMOUNT...DISSOLVE THE REST IN HIS WATER, HE'LL NEVER KNOW!

I'M...I'M GOLD, SALLY! LET'S GO INSIDE...



SIDNEY...HURRYING OFF...LIKE A CHILD...EXCITED WITH A NEW TOY...

THIS IS IT, HONEY! AFTER TONIGHT, WE'RE FREE!

I...I HOPE SO, SALLY! I HOPE SO!



SIDNEY FINALLY RETURNED TO THE DINNER TABLE...

MEET ME AS USUAL, ERIC... AT THE POOL... TONIGHT!

HUSH! WHAT A BEAUTY! HE WAIT TILL YOU SEE IT! GOMES!



...AND THEN, AFTER DINNER...

WELL, SID? WHAT ABOUT YOUR NEW SPECIMEN?

G'WON! I'LL SHOW IT TO YOU!

NOT TONIGHT, SIDNEY! I'M TIRED! I'D LIKE TO GO TO BED!



ALL RIGHT, DEAR! TOMORROW THEN, ERIC! WE'RE TURNING IN!

GOOD-NIGHT, ERIC!

GOOD-NIGHT, YOU TWO!



THE POOL WAS STILL WHEN ERIC GAVE OUT TO IT. THE MOONLIGHT SHIMMERED ON ITS SURFACE. HE WAITED, PACING UP AND DOWN. FINALLY, SALLY CAME OUT OF THE BLACKNESS, TOWARD HIM...

ERIC... DARLING...



SALLY STOOD BEFORE HIM, HER YOUNG FULL BODY REVEALINGLY ENCASED IN HER BATHING SUIT...

SIDNEY! IS HE...?

ASLEEP! I GAVE HIM THE PILLS AND HE WENT OFF LIKE A BABY. HE WON'T BOTHER US... EVER AGAIN! HE'LL BE DEAD IN AN HOUR!



AND THEN SHE WAS IN HIS ARMS, AND HE WAS HOLDING HER CLOSE, HIS LIPS SEARCHING FOR HERS, FINDING THEM, AND FEELING OF THEIR SOFTNESS...

SALLY, BABY! ERIC... MY SWEET



SHE PUSHED AWAY FROM HIM, GASPING...

I'M YOURS NOW, ERIC! ALL YOURS!

SALLY...



HER EYES SPARKLED, PLAYFULLY! SHE DARTED TOWARD THE POOL EDGE...

... BUT IF YOU WANT ME, YOU'LL HAVE TO CATCH ME...

COME BACK HERE, YOU LITTLE TEASE...



THE SPLASH. THE LONG WAIT TILL SALLY'S HEAD APPEARED. BUT SHE CAME UP WITH NO SMILE ON HER FACE. SHE CAME UP SCREAMING...

ERIC! MY GOD!



AND THE THRASHING... AND ERIC DIVING IN... NOT KNOWING WHAT WAS MAKING SALLY SCREAM...



SALLY! I'M COMING!

THE HOUSE WAS STILL. THE POUNDING HAD STOPPED. ERIC LAY IN A POOL OF BLOOD ON THE COLD PATIO. THE LAST DROP OF LIFE SEEPED OUT OF HIS ARM-STUMP ONTO THE RED-STAINED FLAGSTONES...



UPSTAIRS, SIDNEY GASPED AND SIGHED... HIS LAST BREATH RUSHING OUTWARD FROM HIS COLLAPSING LUNGS...



AND BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE SWIMMING POOL, OUTLINED IN THE FILTERED MOONLIGHT, SIDNEY'S HEWEST ACQUISITION, A *MAN-EATING SHARK*, TWISTED AND CAVORTED IN THE BLOOD-RED BRINE-WATER...



...ITS HUNGER FINALLY SATISFIED AFTER ITS LONG JOURNEY! SALLY HAD BEEN THE *MAIN COURSE*, AND ERIC'S ARM... *DESSERT*...

THE
END.

A SHOCK SUSPENSE STORY

THE ASSAULT!

THE DOWNPOUR HAD BEGUN AGAIN. THE RAINDROPS PATTERNED ON THE CAR-TOPS, RAN IN TINY RIVULETS DOWN THEIR WINDSHIELDS, AND DROPPED IN MINIATURE WATERFALLS TO THE RAGING TORRENT SWEEPING BESIDE THE CURBSTONE. THE MEN Huddled UNDER THE SHELTER OF THE PORCH, THEIR LIPS SET TIGHT, THEIR EYES PEERING INTO THE DARKNESS BEYOND THE SHEETS OF FALLING WATER. MRS. CARTWRIGHT SAT IN THE ROCKER, SOBBING. HER HUSBAND STOOD BEHIND HER, STROKING HER SHOULDER, COMFORTING HER...

SOMETHING... SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAS HAPPENED TO HER! I KNOW IT! I FEEL IT! OH, LUCK. SOB... MY BABY! MY... SOB... BABY!

PLEASE, HONEY! THEY'LL FIND HER! DON'T CRY! SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT... YOU WAIT AND SEE!

WHAT DOY SAY, BOYS? SOON AS THE RAIN LET'S UP A LITTLE, WE'LL TAKE THE CAR AND SCOUT AROUND TOWN AGAIN!

IN THE EAST, THE FIRST GREY STREAKS OF DAWN GLOWED SADLY AGAINST THE HEAVY RAINCLOUDS. IT WAS ALMOST SIX A.M. MRS. CARTWRIGHT SHOOK HER HEAD...

IT'S BEEN ALMOST **THIRTY-SIX HOURS** SINCE SHE LEFT. WHEN SHE DIDN'T COME THE **FIRST** NIGHT, I THOUGHT SHE'D STAYED OVER ONE OF HER **FRIENDS' HOUSES** LIKE SHE ALWAYS DOES. BUT THEN **YESTERDAY**, AND ALL **LAST NIGHT**, NOT A WORD!

SOMEONE'S **COMIN'!** SOMEDNE'S COMIN' DOWN THE BLOCK! MAYBE IT'S ONE OF THE **BOYS!** MAYBE.



SHE CAME OUT OF THE WET, GREY DAWN. SHE CAME WITH HER HAIR STRINGY AND RUNNING AND HER FACE WHITE AND FRIGHTENED. SHE LOOKED AT THE PARKED CARS, AND THE GATHERED MEN WHO'D BEEN SEARCHING ALL NIGHT FOR HER, AND AT HER MOTHER AND FATHER...

IT...IT'S HER!

LUCY! LUCY!

MY BABY! MY BABY!

CRIPES, YOUNG LADY! THE WHOLE TOWN'S OUT HUNTIN' YOU!



SHE LOOKED AT THE MEN WITH THEIR ANGRY FACES, AND AT HER MOTHER'S SWOLLEN EYES AND AT HER FATHER'S STERN GRIMACE, AND SUDDENLY, SHE BEGAN TO CRY...



OH, MOM! MOM! DADDY... SOB... SOB...

BABY! BABY, WHAT IS IT?

WHERE WERE YOU FOR TWO NIGHTS, YOUNG LADY?

LEAVE 'EM ALONE, SAM! LET HER FOLKS DO THE TALKIN'!

SHE STUMBLED UP THE PORCH STEPS AND THREW HERSELF BEFORE THE ROCKER, SOBBING. MRS. CARTWRIGHT CRADLED HER DAUGHTER'S HEAD IN HER LAP, STROKING HER DRENCHED HAIR...



YOU... YOU HAD US WORRIED SICK, LUCY! WORRIED SICK! WHERE WERE YOU LAST NIGHT... AND ALL DAY YESTERDAY... AND THE NIGHT BEFORE...?

OH, MOMMA! IT... IT WAS AWFUL!

WHAT WAS AWFUL, LUCY? TELL US WHERE YOU WERE! TELL US!

LUCY CARTWRIGHT LOOKED UP AND THE TEARS STREAMED FROM HER SEVENTEEN YEAR OLD EYES AND DOWN HER PALE WHITE CHEEKS. THE WORDS ERUPTED FROM HER MOUTH, THEY CAME FULL OF FRIGHT AND FEAR AND SHAME...



IT WAS... IT WAS OLD HODGES! HE... HE FORGED ME TO STAY IN HIS CABIN. HE LOCKED ME IN... AND HE DID THINGS!

A HUSH SEEMED TO FALL OVER EVERYTHING. EVEN THE INCESSANT RAIN SUDDENLY LET UP. IT WAS SILENT ON THE CARTWRIGHT PORCH SAVE FOR THE BREATHING OF THE MEN AND LUCY'S PITIFUL SOBBING...



WHAT... WHAT THINGS, LUCY? WHAT DID HE DO?

I... I... SOB... I CAN'T TELL YOU! SOB! THEY... THEY WERE... SOB... TERRIBLE THINGS!

THE MEN STARED AT LUCY! THEY STARED AT HER WIDE FRIGHTENED EYES AND HER QUIVERING LIPS AND HER YOUNG BODY. AND THE ANGER GREW IN THEM. THEY WERE SILENT BUT THE ANGER BREWED. LUCY'S VOICE WAS PRACTICALLY A SCREAM...



HE KEPT ME THERE! HE WOULDN'T LET ME GO. HE KEPT ME THERE ALL NIGHT AND ALL DAY AND ALL LAST NIGHT. THIS MORNING, HE FELL ASLEEP AND I ESCAPED.

OLD HODGES, THE TOWN RECLUSE, THE TOWN DERELICT. QUIET OLD HODGES. LIVING ALONE ON THE OUTSKIRTS IN HIS SHABBY CABIN, KEEPING TO HIMSELF. QUEER OLD HODGES...



HE GAVE MY KID GANDY ONCE. TOLD HER HE HAD A PIRATES' TREASURE IN HIS SHACK.

I WARNED MINE TO STAY AWAY FROM HIM. NEVER TRUSTED HIM!

HE... HE'S A DEGENERATE. HE OUGHT TO BE LYNCHED!

MR. CARTWRIGHT'S FISTS GLENCHED AND UNGLENCHED. FINALLY HE SHOUTED, AND HIS VOICE WAS HOARSE AND ANGRY AND WILD...



WELL WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR, FOR GOD'S SAKE? LOOK AT MY BABY! LOOK WHAT HE'S DONE TO HER! LET'S GET HIM!

G'MON!

WE'LL TEACH HIM!

THEY STAMPEDED DOWN THE PORCH STEPS WITH IMPU-
RIATED FORCE, THEY SLAMMED INTO THEIR CARS AND
THEY SHOUTED AND SWORE, THEY WERE ANGRY MEN.
THEY WERE MEN WITH A MISSION...

WE'LL PICK UP THE OTHERS!
HE'LL BE SORRY, THE DIRTY @#X!
O'WON! THE POOR KID!



BY THE TIME THE MOTORCADE REACHED OLD HOOGE'S
GABIN, THE AMOUNT OF CARS HAD DOUBLED. THEY
PULLED UP BEFORE THE SHACK WITH A SCREAMING
AND SQUEALING OF BRAKES. ANGRY MEN POURED
FROM THEIR INNARDS, THEY CAME WITH STICKS
AND CLUBS AND ANGRY FACES...



THEY MOVED IN. THE OLD MAN
FLAIED. HIS SCREAM ECHOED
THROUGH THE CAMP MORNING AIR...



THE ANGRY CLUBS AND THE ANGRY
STICKS ROSE AND FELL... ROSE AND
FELL... AND THE SCREAM FADED...



THE COUGHING OF THE COLO WET ENGINES, AND THE
ROAR AS THEY SPEED OFF, AND THE GRINDING OF GEARS
BLOTED OUT THEIR SHOUTS. LUCY LIFTED HER HEAD
FROM HER MOTHER'S LAP AND WATCHED AS THEIR
CARS WHIPPED AWAY INTO THE GREY DAWN...



THE DOOR TO THE REGLUSE'S SHACK GRUMPLED LIKE
PAPER UNDER THE HEAVY ONSLAUGHT. THE OLD MAN
SAT UP IN HIS BED WITH A START, AS THEY JAMMED IN.
THE COLOR DRAINED FROM HIS FACE AND HE GLUTCHED
HIS THREADBARE PATCHED BLANKET UP AROUND HIS
NECK...



THE PATCHED BLANKET TURNED
GRIMSON AND THE WHITE FORM
BENEATH TWITCHED, THEN LAY
STILL...



THE SUN ROSE, PUSHING AWAY THE LAST OF THE BLACK RAIN CLOUDS. THE DAY WORE ON, ON STREET CORNERS, IN BARS, IN STORES THROUGHOUT THE TOWN, THE CONVERSATIONS WERE ALL THE SAME...



THEY **DID** RIGHT! HE DESERVED IT!

THE **POOR** KID! WHAT A HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE.

HE SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN A FAIR TRIAL. IT WASN'T RIGHT WHAT THEY DID!

IT WAS TOWARD AFTERNOON THAT THE DOORBELL OF THE CARTWRIGHT HOME JANGLED FOR THE HUNDRETH TIME. MR. CARTWRIGHT OPENED IT WEARILY...



YES?

I... I WANT TO SEE **LUCY**! TELL HER... TELL HER **GEORGE** IS HERE. TELL HER I WANT TO SEE HER.

HE WAS TALL AND IN HIS LATE TWENTIES OR EARLY THIRTIES. HIS EYES WERE TIRED... LOOKING AS IF HE'D JUST GOTTEN UP. HE NEEDED A SHAVE...



SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BE **DISTURBED**! SHE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE **ANYONE**. SHE'S IN HER ROOM AND...

SHE'LL **SEE** ME! ONE SIDE...

HE PUSHED PAST MR. CARTWRIGHT AND STRODE THROUGH THE HOUSE...



NOW JUST A **MINUTE**, YOUNG MAN! YOU'VE GOT A NERVE... TO... **YOUNG MAN!**

WHO IS IT, DADDY? WHO OH! IT'S YOU, **GEORGE!**

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU, **LUCY!**



THERE'S NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT, **GEORGE!** NOTHING...

I JUST **HEARD** ABOUT IT... ABOUT **HODGES**... AND ABOUT YOU... AND WHAT THEY **DID** TO HIM. TO OLD **HODGES!**



LUCY? IS THIS MAN...?

IT'S ALL RIGHT, DADDY! COME ON, **GEORGE!** WE'LL GO FOR A **WALK!** I'D RATHER NOT TALK... **HERE!**

LUCY! WHEN ARE YOU COMING **BACK?** WHO IS THIS MAN?



I'LL BE BACK **SOON**, MOMMA! **GEORGE** AND I HAVE SOMETHING TO... **SETTLE!**

LUCY! I...

LET HER GO MOMMA! LET HER GO...

IT WAS QUIET IN THE WOODS. IT WAS ALMOST NIGHT AND THE BIRDS HAD STOPPED THEIR SINGING. GEORGE HELD HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS AND HE SOBBED, HIS WORDS FALTERED... BUT HE SHOOK THEM OUT...

I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU THE MINUTE I LAID EYES ON YOU, LUCY, YOU KNEW THAT, DIDN'T YOU?



'REMEMBER WHEN WE MET... IN THAT ROADSIDE JOINT? YOU CAME IN OUT OF THE NIGHT... ALONE...'

HELLO! NO DATE?

UH-UH, INTERESTED IN FILLING THE VAGANCY?



'I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL I'D EVER SEEN. WE MUST HAVE DANCED TO EVERY RECORD IN THAT GRUMMY JUKE-BOX...'

I GOT A CAR OUTSIDE, LUCY! WANT TO GO FOR A RIDE?

SURE, GEORGE! WAIT! I FIX MY FACE!



'REMEMBER HOW WE DROVE AROUND AND FINALLY PARKED NEAR THE LAKE...'

LIKE ME, GEORGE?

LIKE YOU FINE, LUCY!



'HOW I TOOK YOU IN MY ARMS... AND KISSED YOU... AND NOW THE MOON SPARKLED IN YOUR EYES... AND HOW I HELD YOU AND WE WERE CLOSE...'

ON, GEORGE...

DARLING...



'THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME, WASN'T IT, LUCY? THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME IT HAPPENED... IN MY CAR... BY THE LAKE... NEARLY THREE MONTHS AGO. BUT THERE WERE OTHER TIMES, WEREN'T THERE?'

IT'S... IT'S ALMOST MORNING, GEORGE! I'VE GOT TO GET HOME! THE FOLKS WILL... WORRY!

WHAT WILL YOU TELL THEM, DEAREST?



'YOU SLEPT OVER AT A GIRL FRIEND'S HOUSE, DIDN'T YOU, LUCY? THAT'S WHAT YOU TOLD THEM. BUT YOU LIED, DIDN'T YOU? YOU LIED! YOU SPENT THE NIGHT WITH ME... AT MY PLACE...'

LET ME OFF HERE! I'LL WALK THE REST OF THE WAY, GEORGE!

OKAY, HONEY!



'I KNEW THE OLD MAN, LUCY... OLD HODGES! I KNEW HIM WELL. HE WAS A GOOD MAN. HE KEPT TO HIMSELF... BUT HE WAS HARMLESS. I TOLD HIM ABOUT YOU...'

SHE SOUNDS WONDERFUL, GEORGE! SOMEDAY, IF YOU'RE NOT TOO ASHAMED TO BRING HER HERE, I'D LIKE TO MEET HER.

ASHAMED, OLD TIMER? WHY SHOULD I BE ASHAMED?



'I LOVED HIM, LUCY! I LOVED HIM LIKE A FATHER. REMEMBER WHEN I BROUGHT YOU UP THERE TO MEET HIM?'

SO THIS IS LUCY! WELL, YOUNG LADY! GEORGE SEEMS TO LIKE YOU AN AWFUL LOT!

THAT I DO, POP! THAT I DO!

C'MON, GEORGE! LET'S GO!



'IT WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST, WASN'T IT? THE NIGHT HE SUPPOSEDLY DID THINGS TO YOU. BUT YOU LIED, DIDN'T YOU LUCY? YOU WEREN'T IN OLD HODGES'S CABIN THAT NIGHT. YOU WERE IN MY PLACE, WEREN'T YOU?'

HONEY! IT'S ALMOST MORNING! I'VE GOT TO TAKE YOU HOME!

NO, GEORGE, NOT NOW! KISS ME!



'SO YOU STAYED, DIDN'T YOU, LUCY? YOU STAYED AT MY PLACE ALL THAT DAY AND INTO THE NEXT NIGHT! AND THEN, TOWARDS MORNING, I PROPOSED. I REMEMBER IT'D BEGUN TO RAIN...'

I... I WANT TO MARRY YOU, LUCY!

MARRY?! GEORGE! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!



'IT WAS FUNNY, WASN'T IT LUCY! SO FUNNY... TO YOU...'

BUT, LUCY! I LOVE YOU! SURELY... YOU WANT TO MARRY ME! I MEAN, AFTER ALL THIS...

MARRY YOU, YOU! SURELY... YOU WANT TO MARRY ME! I MEAN, AFTER ALL THIS...



KICKS!? HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?

YOU DON'T THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY MAN I'VE KNOWN, DO YOU, GEORGE? DON'T BE SO EGOTISTICAL! I'VE HAD PLENTY BEFORE YOU! I LIKE 'EM! AND YOU WON'T BE THE LAST, EITHER!

GET OUT! GET OUT, YOU CHEAP LITTLE TRAMP! WHY...

THANKS FOR THE KICKS, GEORGE!



'AND WHEN YOU GOT HOME, YOU LIED TO THEM... DIDN'T YOU? YOU LIED TO SAVE YOUR LOUSY REPUTATION...'

IT WAS... IT WAS **OLD HODGES!** HE... HE FORCED ME TO STAY IN HIS CABIN, HE LOCKED ME IN... AND HE DID THINGS!



'YOU LIED, DIDN'T YOU, LUCY? AND HIS BLOOD WAS ON YOUR HANDS? THEY KILLED HIM, DIDN'T THEY?'

THAT'S ENOUGH! HE'S DEAD!



'AND WHEN I HEARD ABOUT IT, I CAME TO SEE YOU. AND I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO...'

ALL RIGHT, GEORGE! YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME? NOW... TALK!

I'M GOING TO TELL THEM WHERE YOU REALLY WERE, LUCY! I'M GOING TO TELL THEM THE TRUTH!



I DON'T THINK YOU WILL, GEORGE! **OLD HODGES IS DEAD!** WHAT'S DONE CAN'T BE UNDONE! I HAD TO PROTECT MYSELF, BUT YOU WON'T TELL! FOR THE SAME REASON THAT NONE OF THE OTHERS TOLD!

OH, WOULDN'T I? I LOVED HIM, YOU LITTLE ***?x!! I'M GOING TO SEE THAT YOU GET YOURS FOR THIS!

YOU'RE FORGETTING, GEORGE! WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH... WHEN YOU TELL THEM WHAT REALLY HAPPENED, YOU'RE SENDING YOURSELF UP THE RIVER FOR TWENTY YEARS! I'M SEVENTEEN, YOU KNOW... AND IN THIS STATE, THERE'S A LAW...

CHOKES...



'WHAT ELSE COULD I DO, LUCY? YOU WERE ROTTEN... THROUGH AND THROUGH! YOU DESERVED IT! IT WAS THE ONLY THING I COULD DO...'

GEORGE... DON'T! WHERE DID YOU GET THAT GUN? DON'T POINT IT AT ME!

IT'S **OLD HODGES'S**, LUCY! HE KEPT IT... FOR PROTECTION. BUT IT COULDN'T PROTECT HIM FROM AN ANGRY MOB... ANGERED BY LIES...



THEY WERE COMING CLOSER NOW. IN A MINUTE THEY WOULD FIND HIM... AND HE'D HAVE TO TELL THEM THE WHOLE STORY... EXACTLY AS HE'D TOLD IT TO LUCY... TO LUCY... LYING THERE... WITH THE SIX BULLET HOLES IN HER FACE...

SOS... SOS...



SHOCK TALK

President and CEO—Stephen A. Gappi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear Russ,

In SHOCK #7 I really liked "The Small Assassin!" I liked it, but I didn't like the ending. I just bought #7 yesterday. I can't wait till I get my next one! My cousin Tonya takes my comics and slaps them on my head. What should I do?

Dara Conner Cincinnati, OH

Say "ouch!"

Dear Mr. Cochran,

Thank you so much for your heroic effort in reprinting the EC line. I plan to subscribe to all the horror comics and SHOCK and CRIME. I have a question, when will the line of EC's run out? Also, will you write new stories, start over, stop production, or what? Most sincerely,

Chris Pittman Franklin, MA

SHOCK, for example, went to 18 issues—ten more to go. At 90 days per issue, that's 2 1/2 years more. CRYPT, however, went to 30 issues. And so on.

We have no current plans to do new stories in this, uh, venue; nor in fact any plans to announce about the long run.

Dear Mr. Cochran,

I've just read SHOCK #7 which held my interest throughout. "Beauty and the Beast", drawn by Jack Kamen, curdled my blood. It wasn't so much the methods by which the wives are murdered that horrified me, but the way in which the men threateningly tell their wives what to do before murdering them.

"The Bribe!", drawn by Wood, has a dramatic realism in its depiction of corruption and human weakness. The ending of the strip has great irony. Great stuff!

"Infiltration", drawn by Joe Oriando, is another good one. This strip is an interesting variation of the 50s theme of alien infiltration, which perhaps reflects anxieties, insecurities and fears that many people felt during the Cold War period, when the threat of the Red Menace was a very real thing to people who worried about it. Translated into science-fictional terms, this becomes the Red Planet Peril. Last week I watched on TV one of my favorite 50s films, the original black and white version of "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" (56) directed by Don Siegel, [with its] nightmare scenario [and] clever social comment. The infiltrators in this film have no emotions and don't need love. I've read the novel on which it was based, "The Body Snatchers" by Jack Finney (55) which, in its conclusion, ends up spouting an almost McCarthyist/Churchillian jingoism, eg. "...a fragment of a wartime speech moved through my mind: 'We shall fight them in the fields, and in the hills; we shall never surrender.'"

I like the strip adaption of Ray Bradbury's "The Small Assassin!" I read the story when I was a teenager. It has an atmosphere of fear, hopelessness and menace which this strip adaption also conveys. The comics work of George Evans adds realism to the brooding menace of Bradbury's story.

John Miller Edinburgh, SCOTLAND

And, it's hard to draw a convincing baby! We admit that, when it comes to "Infiltration!" "Body Snatcher" aliens, we would fight, too, by Jingo!

Dear Mr. Cochran and Staff,

I am writing to follow up to my first letter, which appeared in SHOCK #6. You show neither age nor ignorance in never before hearing of The Cramps.

The Cramps are an American rock n' roll band led by Lux Interior and Poison Ivy Renshaw. They play wild "rockabilly voodoo" saturated with B-culture americana. I had read that Lux in particular was a childhood fan of EC horror comics so naturally I was led to you.

I hope to have shed some light on the subject for you. It is my suggestion that all you Ghoulunatics out there creep down to your local music store and buy some recordings by The Cramps right now. Many thanks again, Mr. Cochran for bringing back these "Notorious" ECs for us all to enjoy!! Many, many thanks!

Andy Terwilliger Sunrise, FL

Thanks, I think. (All our lives spent 100 miles from Nashville/Memphis, and we never heard of rockabilly voodoo! We feel deprived!)

Dear Russ,

I just read SHOCK #7 and I'm a little bit confused about "The Bribe!" Why would the club owner pay over a thousand dollars a year to the fire inspector just so he wouldn't declare his club a fire hazard? I mean, surely with that amount of money the owner could put several exits in. Anyway I got to say I enjoy reading all the EC comics. Is it possible to order back issues of HAUNT, VAULT, CRIME and TWO-FISTED?

Naftan Little Montgomery, AL

Hm. \$1000 would buy a lot of carpentry in 1953. But don't be a killjoy! We'd have had a boring story—something along the lines of "Home Improvement."

Yes, ALL back issues are available. See below.

Also available this month are CRYPT and WEIRD SCIENCE. Watch for VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED next month. Don't forget HAUNT, WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY and CRIME. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details).

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, \$3 each (subject to availability). All others up thru issue #3, \$1.50 each. Issues #4 and up, \$2 each. Add \$5 per order (\$10 outside US) for S&H.

We want MORE letters! Write to:
SHOCK
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS SHOCK SUSPENSESTORIES #6 (APR/MAY 53)

COVER by Al Feldstein

"Pleasure"
"The Assault!"
"The Arrival"
"Sleep No More!"

Jack Kamen
Wally Wood
Al Williamson
George Evans

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We will be happy, however, to reply to letters. We will be happy to acknowledge publication of letters. So do us and send your address on the individual letter.

Here I am, bright-eyed and bushy-headed, ready for another foray into the realm of the esophagus. Don't be misled—that's my happy-face! For I am very happy to share the following creepy creations from my rottan ratinua of writers and artist! This header illo comes from Derek Malone, age 12, Conway, MO. —CK

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF FINE ARTS #17

FIRST, A lovely candle-lit vignette of the Vault-Keeper, caught in a common pastime of his, reading MY comic! Where else do you think he gets his ideas? Artist Andrew Raub shares a few words with us below. —CK



I love EC comics! They are truly frightening, and they send chills up my spine. I just have one question: Is The Old Witch available? I'd like to go on a blind date with her! She's everything a guy could want—good looks, charm, and great cooking abilities! Well, gotta go. The blood I'm writing this in is drying up. Make mine EC! Your fan,

Andrew T. Raub

Webster, NY

She's available, but not advisable when she's visible. 'Cause when it comes to OW, only a BLIND date is possible! —CK

A SHORT Lovecraftian lyric from our Friend Frank, paired with an aldrich drawing from Kurt Krause, Fountain City, WI. —CK

Galactic Thud

A galactic thud
Time and space in a twist.
Explorers searched for answers
in the stellar mist.

What they found was appalling
Nothing they could do
A ravenous glowing interber
was in the cosmic stew.

Frank X. Mattson III
New Holland, PA



Thanks for publishing my poetry and drawing. My poetry always looks better to me in print than it does when I write it; hoo-ha, that's a fact! I have enclosed another poem, all those corpses and tombs get me inspired.

The Merry Old Soul

He loved everyone
And everyone loved him
He'd light up the party
When everything looked dim
The sad day came
He just up and died
A gloom set on the village
and everybody cried
Then one night
The night turned into day,
He was back a little rotten,
Only just a little rotten.
A state to which they didn't cotton!
But who's to say?



Frank X. Mattson III

New Holland, PA

WE'VE PAIRED Frank and Kurt again, because they both work so narrow! Thanks, boys! —CK



SPRINGTIME IS a'coming, and can baseball be far behind? Certainly not, even if it's bare-bones ball as depicted by Little Leaguer Elliott Kazan, age 6, of Richmond HTS, OH. —CK

Send your contribs (not returnable, not too long, not too big, legible double-spaced text &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit!) to:

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF FINE ARTS

RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469

WEST PLAINS MO 65775

We welcome contributions. We cannot promise in return: acknowledgement or publish contributions. We edit for clarity, accuracy and size. We automatically withdraw most letters and art so could answer you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication. To us we need your address on the editorial contribution.



SUICIDE

Patterson bit his lip and sent his fist crashing into the old man's face. There was a cry of pain and the old man staggered back and collapsed against the far wall. Weakly he lifted one hand and tried to protect himself from further attack. Patterson squinted at him, glanced around the basement to make certain that he was alone with the old janitor . . . then stepped forward ominously. His hand emerged from his jacket clutching a revolver.

"P-Please . . ." the old man stammered, "j-just lemme alone. I-I won't say nothing to the cops . . ."

Patterson grimaced and continued to move forward, the barrel of his gun aimed at the old janitor's forehead. "Too bad, Granpa," he muttered, "that you happened to be down here in the basement when I broke into the joint. I ain't gonna have you sing to the police as soon as I amscray . . . I already got two prison stretches behind me. This one, for breaking and entering, makes me a three-time loser! And I don't wanna spend the rest of my life up-river!"

The old man straightened up suddenly and tried to dodge past Patterson . . . but the young man grabbed him by the shirt and swung him around violently. With a grunt Patterson sent the old man hurtling across the basement toward the big high-compression steam boiler. The frightened janitor crashed into the boiler and slumped to the floor, his head resting on the concrete. Patterson continued his ominous advance, his

forefinger tightening around the gun trigger.

"Sorry!" Patterson mumbled as he pulled the trigger. There was a sharp roar, and the old man's body jerked as if he were a puppet being manipulated by strings. Patterson stepped forward and, with his free hand, dragged the old man back to the steam boiler. He prodded the body until it sat propped against the boiler, the old man's head resting on the metal and staring out lifelessly.

"One more shot," Patterson mumbled, "right through the first bullet hole . . . with the gun held close so that the skin gets burned and the cops'll think he pulled the trigger on himself and committed suicide!"

Patterson chuckled aloud: SUICIDE! He'd pull the trigger again, then fasten the murder gun into his victim's hand. The Law'd never be able to prove that the old geezer hadn't croaked himself!

Crouching low over the lifeless janitor, Patterson shoved the gun forward so that the barrel touched the old man's forehead at precisely the point where the fatal bullet had gone seconds before. *SUICIDE*. Patterson repeated as he pulled the trigger.

There was a sharp crash; then a hissing roar that seemed to fill the room in an instant. Patterson tried to leap back, but he was too late. A burst of searing steam shot out of the boiler through the ragged hole Patterson's bullet had made after it ploughed through the old man's head. Patterson screamed in agony, but the steam was already enveloping him . . . cooking the skin of his face so that it was purplish red . . . turning his throat and chest into a darkened lump of seared meat . . . choking off his last breath so that it rattled for a moment. Then he was silent . . . and there was only the steady hiss of the escaping steam . . .

THE ARRIVAL

THEY HAD WATCHED EARTH. THEY HAD SAT ON THEIR FUNCTIONAL WEIGHT-RESTERS BEFORE THEIR HUGE MAGNIFICATION SCREENS AND THEY'D WATCHED THE GREEN PLANET FOR COUNTLESS EONS. EACH MARTIAN NIGHT, WHEN THE SUN HAD SET BEYOND THE RED MOUNTAINS AND THE DEAD SEAS LAY BATHED IN THE FAINT LIGHT FROM THEIR TWO MOONS, THEY'D TURNED ON THEIR TELESCOPE-MACHINES AND THEY'D STUDIED GREEN EARTH, AND THEY'D WONDERED. THEY'D WONDERED IF LIFE AS THEY KNEW IT EXISTED THERE TOO AS IT DID HERE ON MARS. AND THEN, ON ONE PARTICULAR NIGHT, THEY'D SEEN IT. THEY'D SEEN THE TINY PIN-POINTS OF LIGHT DOTTING THE LAND AREAS GO OUT. THEY'D SEEN THE FIERY GLOW RUSH AROUND THE GREEN SPHERE, SWALLOWING IT UP IN ONE HORRIBLE BLAZE OF ATOMIC FURY.



AND EVERY MARTIAN NIGHT SINCE THEN, FOR A MILLENNIUM, THEY'D TURNED THEIR TELESCOPE-MACHINES TO THE NOW BLACK PLANET AND THEY'D WAITED HOPEFULLY. BUT NO LIGHTS CAME ON AGAIN. NO GREEN AREAS SPANG UP TO PUSH THE BLACKNESS BACK...

AND THEN, IN THE MARTIAN YEAR OF 131,542, IN WHAT BY OUR MEASUREMENT OF TIME WOULD BE THE NINETY-FIFTH THOUSANDTH YEAR AFTER THE GREAT ATOMIC EXPLOSION, THEY SAW IT. A TINY NEEDLE OF BLUE FLAME STREAKING AWAY FROM BLACK EARTH... STREAKING TOWARD THEIR RED PLANET...



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY

GROZO MARVELED AT THE FINGER OF FLAME ON THE MAGNIFICATION SCREEN...

AND IN ALL THIS TIME, THEY'VE DONE WHAT WE COULD NEVER DO! THEY'VE DEVELOPED SPACE-TRAVEL!

NOW THEY ARE COMING TO OUR PLANET! TO MARS!



SPDORK WAS SILENT FOR A MOMENT. THEN, WHEN HE SPOKE, HIS MARTIAN WORDS WERE FILLED WITH WONDERMENT AND AWE...

WHAT WILL THEY LOOK LIKE, GROZO? THESE EARTH CREATURES? WILL THEY BE DIFFERENT?

WHO IS TO SAY THAT LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS MUST EVOLVE AS IT DID HERE ON MARS, SPDORK. EVOLUTION IS LIKE A ROAD WITH MANY FORKS. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO TURN...



PERHAPS THEY WILL BE GHASTLY CREATURES, GROZO! CREATURES THAT WILL SICKEN US WHEN WE GAZE UPON THEM!

PERHAPS! AND IN TURN, MY DEAR SPDORK, WE MAY VERY WELL SICKEN THEM!

IN ANY CASE, SPDORK! WE MUST PREPARE FOR THEIR ARRIVAL!

WHAT IF THEY COME ON A MISSION OF WAR, AND NOT OF PEACE, GROZO?

WE MUST BE PREPARED, GROZO!

COME! LET US NOTIFY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL! THEY MUST MAKE PLANS!



THE BLUE STREAK OF FLAME IN THE MARTIAN SKY GREW BRIGHTER EACH NIGHT AS IT HURTLIED ACROSS THE BLACK GULF OF SPACE THAT SEPARATED EARTH FROM THE RED PLANET. IN TWO MONTHS, THE FLAME HAD GROWN SO BRIGHT IT WAS VISIBLE DURING THE MARTIAN DAY...

THEY ARE COMING CLOSER, GROZO!

THEY WILL BE HERE, SOON!



AND THEN, ON THE 13RD NIGHT AFTER THE FIRST SIGHTING OF THE MARS-BOUND EARTH SPACE-SHIP, SOMETHING STRANGE HAPPENED. GROZO HAD TURNED ON THE EQUIVALENT OF A RADIO TO LISTEN TO SOME MUSIC, THE JUMBLED GARBLE INTERRUPTED HIS FAVORITE PIECE...

BY THE GREAT CANAL OF ZKORL! WHAT INTERFERENCE IS THIS?

WAIT, GROZO! LISTEN! COULD THOSE GUTTERAL SQUEALS BE A LANGUAGE. AN ALIEN LANGUAGE?



THE TWO MARTIANS LISTENED TO THE SQUAWKING SOUNDS THAT JAMMED THE MUSIC PROGRAM...

PERHAPS IT IS THE EARTH-CREATURES... BROADCASTING ON OUR WAVE-LENGTHS!

HURRY! GET THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR THAT WE'VE PREPARED FOR THEIR ARRIVAL!

THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR, NEWLY DEVELOPED FOR THE OCCASION, WAS ROLLED OUT OF ITS STORAGE COMPARTMENT...

THERE! IT IS ON!

TZEE...DOEE...ZZT... PTEE...MARS! HELLO, MARS! THIS IS EARTH-ROCKET 029 CALLING MARS. HELLO...

IT IS THEM! IT IS THE EARTH CREATURES! HURRY, SPOORK! CALL THE GOVERNMENT TRANSMITTER! WE MUST ANSWER THEM!

HELLO MARS! THIS IS EARTH ROCKET 029 CALLING MARS! AW, IT'S NO USE, CHIEF! THEY DON'T HEAR US!



KEEP TRYING, ANYWAY! WE'VE GOT TO LET THEM KNOW WE'RE COMING ON A PEACEFUL MISSION... SOMEHOW!

OKAY! BUT I THINK IT'S A WASTE OF TIME! THEY'RE PROBABLY SOME IDIOT SAVAGE RAGE!

PUT ME THROUGH TO THE GOVERNMENT TRANSMITTER! QUICKLY!

HELLO, MARS! HELLO, MARS! THIS IS EARTH ROCKET... AW, NUTS!

YES! YES! QUICKLY! SAME WAVELENGTH! YES! BUT STRENGTHEN THE SIGNAL. GIVE IT FULL POWER!

AS YOU WISH, SPOORK! ALL RIGHT! GO AHEAD!



THIS IS STUPID, CHIEF! THEY DON'T...

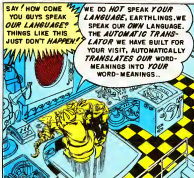
HELLO, EARTH ROCKET 029. HELLO, EARTH ROCKET! THIS IS MARS, ANSWERING...

DO NOT SPEAK TOO FAST, SPOORK! THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR...

HEY! DID YOU HEAR THAT, CHIEF? HELLO MARS. HELLO...

GREETINGS, VISITORS FROM EARTH! WE ON MARS DID YOU WELCOME! YOUR ARRIVAL IS EAGERLY AWAITED!





SAY! HOW COME YOU GUYS SPEAK OUR LANGUAGE? THINGS LIKE THIS JUST DON'T HAPPEN!

WE DO NOT SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE, EARTHLINGS. WE SPEAK OUR OWN LANGUAGE. THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR WE HAVE BUILT FOR YOUR VISIT, AUTOMATICALLY TRANSLATES OUR WORD-MEANINGS INTO YOUR WORD-MEANINGS..



AUTOMATIC TRANSLATORS? WOW! THEN YOU CHARACTERS MUST BE SCIENTIFICALLY ADVANCED!

WE HAVE OBSERVED YOUR PLANET FOR MANY, MANY EONS, MY FRIENDS! WE DEVELOPED TELESCOPES THAT WERE CAPABLE OF SEEING THE LIGHTS OF YOUR OLD CIVILIZATION!



LIGHTS? OH! YOU MEAN THE OLD PRE-ATOMIC WAR CIVILIZATION!

YES! YES! WHAT HAPPENED? TELL US! WE SAW THE EXPLOSION!



THAT WAS NINETY-FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO. IT WAS A WAR. IT ALMOST WIPED ALL LIFE OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH! BUT A FEW OF US MANAGED TO SURVIVE!

AND YOU REBUILT WHAT HAD BEEN DESTROYED.



NOT EXACTLY! CHANGED IT, YOU MIGHT SAY! DID IT OUR OWN WAY! LET ME TELL YOU HOW IT WAS...



'PRE-ATOMIC EARTH WAS POPULATED BY MANY FORMS OF ANIMAL AND PLANT LIFE. IN EARTH'S HISTORY, ONE OF THESE ANIMAL FORMS EVOLVED TO THE POINT WHERE IT BECAME DOMINANT OVER ALL OTHERS..

LOOK, OG! THE SABRE-TOOTHED TIGER ATTACKS!

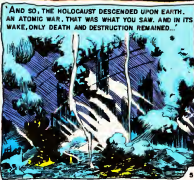
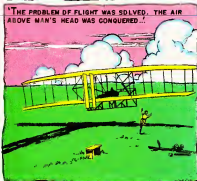
I WILL KILL IT, KOSK... WITH MY NEW SPEAR...

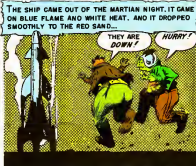


'WITH HIS DOMINATION, MAN BEGAN TO DEVELOP. HE REACHED INTO THE UNKNOWN AND HE LEARNED. HE STUDIED. HE BUILT...

IT WILL BE A TOMB THAT WILL LAST FOR AGES, OH PHAROH!

GOOD! GOOD!





NEEP NO MORE!

A CRIME SUSPENSE STORY



I WONDERED IF MRS. MONAHAN HAD CALLED THE POLICE. MRS. MONAHAN WAS MY LANDLADY. I LIVED ON THE TOP FLOOR OF HER ROOMING HOUSE, PAID \$10 A WEEK FOR ONE ROOM. THAT INCLUDED SUPPERS, OF COURSE. I'D LIVED AT MRS. MONAHAN'S FOR TWO YEARS. I KNEW THEY WERE POLICE THE MINUTE I OPENED THE DOOR...

THAT'S MR. FINNER NOW! HE LIVES ACROSS THE HALL FROM HER!



I TRIED TO ACT SURPRISED AND INNOCENT. BUT I KNEW WHAT THEY WERE AFTER...

QUESTIONS? WHY, NOT AT ALL! ABOUT WHAT?

ABOUT IRENE LAUTON. HOW WELL DID YOU KNOW HER?



IRENE LAUTON WAS MISSING. SHE'D RENTED A ROOM FROM MRS. MONAHAN... RIGHT ACROSS THE HALL FROM ME, AS A MATTER OF FACT... AND THEN, SUDDENLY, SHE'D DISAPPEARED. HER CLOTHES WERE STILL THERE, IN HER ROOM... BUT SHE'D NEVER COME BACK FOR THEM...

MISS LAUTON? WHY... I DIDN'T KNOW HER WELL AT ALL! ONLY TO SAY HELLO, THAT IS.

WHEN DID YOU SEE HER LAST, MR. FINNER?



SATURDAY NIGHT. THAT'S... ER... THREE NIGHTS AGO. SHE WAS COMING OUT OF HER ROOM AS I WAS GOING IN... TO GO TO SLEEP. WE GREETED EACH OTHER. THAT'S ALL. WHY? WHY ALL THESE QUESTIONS?

IRENE LAUTON SEEMS TO HAVE VANISHED OFF THE FACE OF THIS EARTH, MR. FINNER. NO ONE HAS SEEN HER SINCE SATURDAY NIGHT. WE SUSPECT FOUL PLAY.



YOU MEAN...?

MISS LAUTON WAS AN UP-AND-COMING YOUNG ACTRESS, MR. FINNER. SHE HAD EVERYTHING TO LIVE FOR. WHY, SHE'D JUST BEEN SIGNED FOR A GOOD PART IN A BROADWAY PLAY.

SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO SHOW UP AT A PARTY... IN HER HONOR. SHE NEVER CAME. PEOPLE WITH EVERYTHING TO LIVE FOR JUST DON'T VANISH, MR. FINNER. THAT'S WHY WE'RE INVESTIGATING. HER PRODUCER CALLED US IN.

OH, DEAR! I... I DO HOPE NOTHING'S HAPPENED TO HER!

SO DO WE, MR. FINNER. MEANWHILE YOU AND THE REST OF THE BOARDERS BETTER STICK AROUND THIS PLACE TILL WE CLEAR THIS UP AND FIND MISS LAUTON. UNDERSTAND?

OH, YES, SIR!



AS I STARTED UP THE THREE FLIGHTS OF STAIRS TO MY TOP FLOOR ROOM, I COULD HEAR THE DETECTIVES BELOW QUESTIONING MRS. MONAHAN, AND HER ANSWERING THEM...

YOU SAY YOU SAW MISS LAUTON LEAVE FOR THE PARTY, MRS. MONAHAN?

THAT'S RIGHT. SHE LEFT ABOUT NINE. MR. FINNER HAD JUST GONE UP. SHE CAME DOWN... LAUGHING... SO NAPPY... SOB...



IRENE LAUTON! NOW WELL I REMEMBERED IRENE. ESPECIALLY THAT NIGHT. I WAS UNLOCKING THE DOOR TO MY ROOM WHEN SHE CAME OUT OF HERS. BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL, IRENE...

WHY, MISS LAUTON! HOW... ER... LOVELY YOU LOOK TONIGHT!

OH, MR. FINNER! THANK YOU. CONGRATULATE ME! I'VE BEEN SIGNED! I'M GOING TO A PARTY NOW... TO CELEBRATE...



I STOOD AT THE TOP OF THE THIRD FLIGHT OF STAIRS LISTENING TO THE POLICE BELOW...



OKAY, MRS. MONAHAN! WE'LL BE BACK! DON'T LET ANYONE INTO HER ROOM!

AND CALL US IF YOU NOTICE ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS!

I WILL! YES! GOOD-BYE!

I LOOKED ACROSS THE HALL TO IRENE LAUTON'S DOOR. I REMEMBERED HOW I'D ALWAYS LOOKED AT THAT DOOR LONGINGLY, EVER SINCE SHE'D MOVED IN. SHE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL, ESPECIALLY THAT NIGHT...



OH, MISS LAUTON! HOW WONDERFUL FOR YOU! IS IT A GOOD PART?

SECOND TO THE LEAD!

I... I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU, MISS LAUTON! MAY I... MAY I TELL YOU SOMETHING?

I'VE REALLY GOT TO RUN, MR. FINNER. I'M LATE! WHAT IS IT? MAKE IT QUICK!



I REMEMBER HOW I'D SEEN HER DAY AFTER DAY... WEEK AFTER WEEK... SO YOUNG... SO LOVELY... AND HOW I'D WANTED TO TELL HER BUT NEVER FOUND THE WORDS... UNTIL THAT NIGHT... WHEN I SCRAPED UP ENOUGH COURAGE...



I... I WANT YOU TO KNOW, IRENE, THAT EVER SINCE YOU MOVED IN TO THIS BOARDING HOUSE, THAT I'VE LOVED YOU WITH ALL MY HEART! I WAS HOPING THAT YOU, IN TIME...

HUH? WHAT? ME... LOVE YOU? OH, MR. FINNER... HOW FUNNY!

I REMEMBER HOW SHE LAUGHED. HOW LOUD SHE LAUGHED. AND HOW SHE LOOKED AT ME... AND THE RIDICULE THAT WAS IN HER EYES. AND HOW SHE TURNED AND HURRIED AWAY, DOWN THE STAIRS... AND HOW HER LAUGHTER DRIFTED BACK TO ME...



IRENE... CHOKE! IRENE! WAIT! DON'T LAUGH AT ME...

THE DOOR SLAMMING THREE FLIGHTS BELOW WOKE ME FROM MY REVERIE. THE POLICE WERE GONE. I WENT INTO MY ROOM. I LOOKED IT BEHIND ME. I WENT TO MY BUREAU AND DUG DOWN DEEP AND BROUGHT OUT THE LACE HANDKERCHIEF WITH THE HEAVY PERFUME. AND ITS SWEET SMELL FILLED MY NOSTRILS AND BROUGHT IRENE BACK TO ME... RIGHT INTO MY ROOM...



DARLING... DARLING, IRENE!

AFTER A WHILE I HID THE HANDKERCHIEF AND WENT TO BED. THAT NIGHT I TOSSED AND TURNED IN A FRETFUL NIGHTMARE OF IRENE, LAUGHING... AND HER LAUGHTER TURNING TO SCREAMS... AND THEN, SILENCE. THEN BLOOD... A POOL OF BLOOD. AND I AWOKE WITH A START IN THE MORNING TO SEE IT...



OH, MY GOD!

THERE WAS A SICKENING RED BLOTCH OF BLOOD Oozing OUT FROM THE CEILING ABOVE MY BED...

I LEAPED OUT OF BED AND SLIPPED ON A ROBE. I PEERED DOWN THE HALL. NO ONE WAS IN SIGHT. THE BATHROOM WAS EMPTY...



I HURRIED DOWN THE HALL AND WET A SPONGE. I CAME BACK INTO MY ROOM. I CLIMBED ONTO MY BED. I COULD JUST TOUCH THE CEILING. I SCRUBBED...



SOON, THE SPOT WAS GONE. I BREATHED EASIER AFTER THAT. I DRESSED AND HURRIED DOWNSTAIRS. I WAS LATE ALREADY...



I DIDN'T WANT MRS. MONAHAN TO SEE THE WET SPOT ON THE CEILING WHERE THE BLOOD STAIN HAD BEEN. THAT NIGHT, WHEN I CAME HOME, THE POLICE WERE THERE AGAIN...



BUT I DIDN'T TELL THEM WHAT HAPPENED ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES AFTER IRENE HAD LEFT! I DIDN'T TELL THEM HOW I HAD HEARD FOOTSTEPS OUT IN THE HALL AND HOW I'D OPENED MY DOOR...



I DIDN'T TELL THEM HOW MY BLOOD BURNED AS IT POUNDED INTO MY FACE, OUT AND INTO MY HEART, DOWN TO MY FINGERTIPS, AND THROUGH MY BODY. SHE STOOD THERE, HER SKIRT PULLED UP, REVEALING HER SHAPELY LEGS. I DIDN'T TELL THEM HOW I STUMBLED FORWARD, AWKWARDLY...



AND I DIDN'T TELL THEM HOW SHE LAUGHED AT MY AWKWARD ATTEMPT AND SLAMMED THE DOOR IN MY FACE. AND HOW I WENT BACK INTO MY ROOM AND STARED OUT OF THE WINDOW, DOWN AT THE BACK YARD. HOW I SAW MRS. MONAHAN THERE, SITTING IN THE COOL NIGHT AIR, WITH THE OTHERS... THE OTHER BOARDERS. THEY WERE PLAYING CARDS LIKE THEY ALWAYS DID. I KNEW THEN THAT NO ONE ELSE HAD SEEN IRENE RETURN...



THE POLICE WENT AWAY, AND I WENT TO BED, AND AGAIN I HAD THAT HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE...LAUGHING...AND SCREAMING...AND BLOOD...AND WHEN I AWOK IN THE MORNING.

OH, LORD! IT'S THERE AGAIN!

THE POOL OF BLOOD BLOTTING ACROSS THE WHITE CEILING LOOKED LIKE SOME HORRIBLE WOUND IN A FAIR SKIN. IRENE'S SKIN...

I'VE GOT TO CLEAN IT OFF! IT MUST BE SEEPING THROUGH!

I RUBBED WITH THE SPONGE AS I HAD DONE THE MORNING BEFORE, BUT THIS TIME IT *DIDN'T* COME OFF...

WHAT WILL I DO? THEY'LL SEE IT... AND THEY'LL KNOW...

I DRESSED QUICKLY AND HURRIED DOWNSTAIRS TO THE HARDWARE STORE. I HAD TO WAIT FIFTEEN MINUTES FOR IT TO OPEN UP. I NEARLY WENT CRAZY FROM NERVOUSNESS. I KEPT WONDERING IF MRS. MONAHAN WOULD COME INTO MY ROOM TO CLEAN IT AND SEE THE BLOOD AND KNOW...

OKAY, MISTER! I'M SORRY I'M LATE! CAR TROUBLE! WHAT'LL IT BE?

A CAN OF WHITE PAINT, PLEASE. AND A BRUSH. AND HURRY!

I RUSHED BACK TO THE BOARDING HOUSE. MRS. MONAHAN WAS JUST GOING UP THE STAIRS WITH HER CARPET SWEEPER AND BROOM WHEN I PUSHED PAST HER. I WAS IN TIME. I SLAMMED INTO MY ROOM AND LOCKED THE DOOR FROM THE INSIDE. AND THEN I PAINTED OUT THAT AWFUL BLOODY SPOT...

THERE! THERE! IT'S GONE!

MRS. MONAHAN POUNDED ON MY DOOR AND INSISTED THAT I LET HER CLEAN THE ROOM SINCE IT HADN'T BEEN CLEANED THE PREVIOUS DAY, SO I FINALLY LET HER IN. SHE STARED, FIRST AT MY PAINT-SPATTERED HANDS, THEN AT THE PAINT CAN, AND THEN AT THE WHITE SPOT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE YELLOWED CEILING...

THERE WAS A NET SPOT? I THOUGHT I'D TOUGH IT UP!

LOOKS AWFUL! YOU'LL HAVE TO DO THE WHOLE CEILING, NOW! AND MIND YOU! CAREFUL OF THAT BED-SPREAD! IT'S BRAND NEW!

I LOST HALF A DAY'S PAY PAINTING THAT CEILING UNDER MRS. MONAHAN'S WATCHFUL EYE. BUT AT LEAST SHE NEVER KNEW ABOUT THE BLOODSTAIN. THEN, THE NEXT MORNING, AFTER ANOTHER SICKENING NIGHTMARISH SLEEP...

OH, MY GOD! MY GOD!

IT WAS BACK AGAIN! THE BLOODSTAIN! IT SPREAD OVER THE DRY NEW WHITE PAINT BIGGER THAN EVER. AND IT WAS DRIPPING... DRIPPING ON MRS. MONAHAN'S BED-SPREAD...

I STARTED TO PAINT! I USED UP THE REST OF THE CAN. I COVERED THE BLOOD AND IT STOPPED DRIPPING...

THERE! THANK HEAVENS! IT'S STOPPED! AND I CAN'T SEE IT, NOW!



THEN I DRESSED AND GATHERED UP MRS. MONAHAN'S BLOOD-SPATTERED SPREAD. I RUSHED DOWNSTAIRS WITH IT...

HERE! WHERE'RE YOU GOING WITH THAT BED-SPREAD?

OH! I. I'M TAKING IT INTO THE CLEANERS, MRS. MONAHAN! I DID GET SOME PAINT ON IT, AFTER ALL!



I BURIED THAT BEDSPREAD IN A LOT UP THE STREET! I KNEW I COULDN'T TAKE IT INTO A DRY-CLEANERS... NOT WITH THESE BLOOD STAINS ALL OVER IT LIKE THAT! THEN THEY'D KNOW. SO I BURIED IT...

THERE! NO ONE WILL FIND IT HERE!



I WENT DOWNTOWN AND SHOPPED TILL I FOUND THE STORE WHERE MRS. MONAHAN HAD BOUGHT THE SPREAD...AND I BOUGHT A NEW ONE. AND THAT NIGHT, I MOVED THE BED...

CAN'T...UGH...TAKE ANY CHANCES! IF...IT...UGH...DRIPS TONIGHT, I'LL BE READY!



I SLIPPED DOWNSTAIRS AFTER EVERYONE HAD GONE TO BED, AND I TOOK A POT FROM THE STOVE. I CAME BACK AND PUT IT UNDER THE SPOT WHERE THE BLOODSTAIN OZZED OUT OVER THE CEILING...



AND THEN I WENT TO BED. ALL NIGHT I DREAMED THAT SAME CRAZY DREAM, AND IN THE MORNING I AWOK TO THE STEADY THROBBING OF THE BLOOD DRIPPING INTO THE POT. IT WAS HALF FULL, AND THE STAIN SPREAD OVER THE WHITE, WHITE CEILING...

GOT TO STOP IT! GOT TO STOP IT!



BUT I'D USED UP THE PAINT! SO I RUSHED DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT TO THE HARDWARE STORE. AND WHEN I CAME BACK WITH THE NEW CAN, THEY WERE WAITING FOR ME...IN MY ROOM...

MR. FINNER. WE'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU!

OH, GOD, NO! YOU... YOU SAW IT!



THEY WERE SITTING ON THE BED AND THE POT BESIDE THEM WAS ALMOST FULL. I LOOKED UP AND THEY FOLLOWED MY GLANCE. THE BLOODSTAIN GLOWED ANGRY RED...

SAW WHAT, MR. FINNER?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

THE BLOOD! THEN
YOU KNOW! YOU KNOW
I KILLED HER!



THEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER, AND THEN AT ME...

WOULD YOU CARE
TO TELL US ABOUT
IT, MR. FINNER?

SHE LAUGHED AT ME! SHE
DIDN'T THINK I WAS GOOD
ENOUGH FOR HER. SHE DIDN'T
DESERVE TO BE SO BEAUTIFUL.
SHE WAS CHEAP... AND SHE'D
ONLY GIVE HER BEAUTY TO
SOMEONE CHEAP... TO SOME
ONE'S CHEAP CLAWING PAWS...



'SO I WAITED TILL SHE CAME OUT
OF HER ROOM THAT NIGHT! OH YES,
SHE'D RETURNED. SHE'D COME
BACK TO PUT ON A NEW STOCKING.
THE OLD ONE HAD GOTTEN A
FURN WHEN SHE CAME OUT. I
CALLED HER ...'

IRENE! LOOK, BUSTER! LAY
OFF, HUH? YOU'RE NOT
MY TYPE!



'I HELD OUT THE TISSUE-PAPER-
WRAPPED BOX?

IT'S FOR YOU,
IRENE! A GIFT...
FOR LUCK!

FOR ME, FINNER?
HOW NICE...



'SHE CAME INTO MY ROOM. THE
WINDOW WAS SHUT TIGHT AND
THE BLINDS DRAWN SO THAT MRS.
MONAHAN AND THE OTHERS WOULD
NOT HEAR HER...'

WHAT IS IT, FINNER?
WHAT... WHAT? GASP!
MR. FINNER! PUT
DOWN THAT
KNIFE!

YOU'RE TOO
LOVELY TO
LET SOME
ONE ELSE
TOUGH YOU.
IRENE!



SO I KILLED HER. I STABBED
HER SO MANY TIMES, MY ARM HURT!
THEN I PUT HER UP THERE... IN THE
STORAGE ATTIC. THERE'S AN
ENTRANCE THROUGH THAT CLOSET.
I FOUND IT A FEW MONTHS AGO.
NO ONE EVER USED IT! I THOUGHT
IT WOULD BE SAFE THERE... UNTIL
THE BLOOD STARTED DRIPPING...

BLOOD?
DRIPPING?
WHERE?

SHE'S
HERE
ALL RIGHT,
GOBB!
LOOKS
LIKE A
PIN
CUSHION!



ONE OF THEM CLIMBED UP INTO THE ATTIC...

THERE! DON'T
YOU SEE IT
THERE... ON
THE CEILING...
DRIPPING INTO
THAT POT?

MRS. MONAHAN CALLED US
BECAUSE YOU WERE ACTING
SUSPICIOUS, FINNER. SHE SAID
YOU WASHED THE CEILING ONCE,
PAINTED IT TWICE, AND TOOK HER
NEW SPREAD OUT AND BURIED
IT! WE DUG IT UP, FINNER, LISTEN.
THERE'S NO BLOODSTAIN ON THAT
CEILING. NO BLOOD IN THAT POT, IT'S
IN YOUR MIND. YOU'RE SICK, FINNER...
YOU'D BETTER COME ALONG WITH US.



THEY SAID THERE WERE NEVER ANY BLOOD STAINS. THEY SAID
THAT HALF-FULL POT WAS EMPTY. BUT I DIDN'T BELIEVE
THEM. WHY SHOULD I? THEY'RE ALL CRAZY! —THE END—



YOU SAY IT'S A 45-MINUTE BUS TRIP, WITH A TRANSFER, TO THE COMIC BOOK SHOP? YOU SAY IT'S A HARROWING 30-MINUTE DRIVE ON THE EXPRESSWAY TO THE MALL, AND THEN A 30-MINUTE MERRY-GO-ROUND RIDE TO FIND A PARKING PLACE? YOU SAY YOUR TOWN DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A COMIC BOOK SHOP OR BOOKSTORE? IS THAT WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU, BUNKY? WELL, THEN, YOU SHOULD...



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SHOCK

SUSPENSTORIES

JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION

IN THE



TRADITION!



WELLS

IN THIS ISSUE:
E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY
RAY BRADBURY
AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!

RAY BRADBURY



Ray Bradbury was born in Waukegan, Ill., on Aug. 22, 1920. His mother was of Swedish descent, and his father's ancestors came to America in 1630. Ray spent much of his childhood in Arizona. At the age of 12, he received his first typewriter, a toy model, and started to write sequels to Edgar Rice Burroughs novels. As a boy, his greatest interests were magic, acting, and reading the Oz books, Tom Swift, Edgar Allen Poe, and Jules Verne. So it was quite natural, when he began writing, that his first stories were fantasies. He took a short-story course in Los Angeles High School in 1937, graduated in 1938, and had no further formal education. He started submitting stories to magazines at the age of 15, and sold his first story at the age of 21. His early acceptances appeared in the leading pulp magazines. Then in 1945, he sold his first "quality" story to the American Mercury, and followed this with sales to most of America's best-known slick magazines. His stories have been reprinted in some 60 anthologies, including the 1946, 1948, and 1952 volumes of The Best American Short Stories. In 1948, Ray won third prize in the O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories Awards. The only other job Bradbury has ever held outside of writing was during the three years from 1939 to 1942, when he sold newspapers on a street corner at night, while writing during the day. He has had three books of stories published: DARK CARNIVAL, from Arkham House in 1947; THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, from Doubleday in 1950; and THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, Doubleday, 1951. His new book of stories, THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN, is due, again from Doubleday, about the time this bring hits the stands. Ray has just finished writing a science-fiction movie script for a big Hollywood film studio, and has started another. He now lives in Los Angeles with his wife Margaret, whom he married in 1947, and his two daughters . . . Susan, age three, and Ramona, eighteen months. Having been a fervent collector of comic strips and panels since the age of eight (owning a complete file of Buck Rogers strips from 1928 through 1937, Flash Gordon from 1934 through 1938, Prince Valiant from 1937 through the present, and Tarzan (drawn by Hal Foster) from 1932 through 1936, plus hundreds of old Popeyes, Our Our Ways, Alley Oops, etc.), Ray was most enthusiastic when we suggested adapting some of best stories into the comic format. His reaction to the job EC is doing can best be summed up in his own words: "... My thanks and gratitude for the really fine adaptations and beautiful art work you are doing on my stories. This is an entirely new experience to me, and I cannot tell you enough how much I appreciate the painstaking detail and thought you are putting into your efforts. It seems to me that again and again you achieve the exactly right atmosphere and angle in carrying out the story. . . . You people have a way of continually making me happy I can't thank you enough."

The OCTOBER GAME

MITCH PUT THE SUN BACK INTO THE BUREAU DRAWER...

NO NOT THAT WAY. LOUISE WOULDN'T SUFFER THAT WAY SHE WOULD BE DEAD AND IT WOULD BE OVER AND SHE WOULDN'T SUFFER. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT THIS THING HAVE, ABOVE ALL, DURATION. DURATION THROUGH IMAGINATION. HOW CAN I PROLONG HER SUFFERING? NOW, FIRST OF ALL, CAN I BRING IT ABOUT? WELL...



A HORROR SUSPENSE STORY
ADAPTED FROM A TALE BY
RAY BRADBURY

THE MAN STANDING BEFORE THE BEDROOM MIRROR CAREFULLY FITTED HIS CUFF LINKS TOGETHER. HE PAUSED LONG ENOUGH TO HEAR THE CHILDREN RUN BY SWIFTLY ON THE STREET BELOW, OUTSIDE THIS WARM TWO-STORY HOUSE, LIKE SO MANY GRAY MICE, THE CHILDREN... LIKE SO MANY LEAVES...



BY THE SOUND OF THE CHILDREN, YOU KNEW THE CALENDAR DAY. BY THEIR SCREAMS, YOU KNEW WHAT EVENING IT WAS. YOU KNEW IT WAS VERY LATE IN THE YEAR. OCTOBER. THE LAST DAY OF OCTOBER, WITH WHITE GHOST MASKS AND CUT PUMPKINS AND THE SMELL OF DROPPED CANDLES...



NO THINGS HADN'T BEEN RIGHT FOR SOME TIME... OCTOBER DIDN'T HELP ANY. IF ANYTHING, IT MADE THINGS WORSE... HE NODDED SLOWLY AT HIS IMAGE IN THE MIRROR... ADJUSTING HIS BLACK BOW-TIE...

IF, IF THIS WERE *SPRING*, THEN THERE MIGHT BE A CHANCE. BUT *TONIGHT*, ALL THE WORLD IS BURNING DOWN INTO *NOON*. THERE'S NO *GREEN* OF SPRING, NONE OF THE *FRESHNESS*, NONE OF THE *PROMISE*...



BUT IT WAS *DIFFERENT* TONIGHT. THERE WAS A FEELING OF AUTUMN COMING TO LAST A *MILLION YEARS*. THERE WOULD BE *NO SPRING*. HE HAD BEEN SAYING QUIETLY ALL EVENING. IT DIDN'T SHOW ON HIS FACE. IT WAS ALL SOMEWHERE HIDDEN. BUT IT WOULDN'T STOP.

DADDY?

MARION?



AS HE FINISHED HIS BOW-TIE AND PUT ON HIS DARK COAT, MARION APPEARED IN THE DOOR, ALL SKELETONOUS IN HER DISGUISE...

HOW DO I LOOK, DADDY?

FINE!



MITCH HAD NEVER LIKED OCTOBER...EVER SINCE HE FIRST LAY IN THE AUTUMN LEAVES BEFORE HIS GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE MANY YEARS AGO AND HEARD THE WIND AND SAW THE EMPTY YETTS. IT HAD MADE HIM CRY, WITHOUT A REASON...

SOS... SOS...



AND A LITTLE OF THAT SADNESS RETURNED EACH YEAR TO HIM. IT ALWAYS WENT AWAY WITH THE SPRING.

THERE WAS A SOFT HUMMING IN THE HALL. IT WAS MARION, HIS LITTLE ONE. ALL EIGHT QUIET YEARS OF HIM, NEVER A WORD. JUST HER LUMINOUS GRAY EYES AND HER WONDERING LITTLE MOUTH. MARION HAD BEEN IN AND OUT ALL EVENING, TRYING ON VARIOUS MASKS. ASKING HIM WHICH WAS MOST TERRIFYING, MOST HORRIBLE. THEY'D BOTH FINALLY DECIDED...

THE SKELETON MASK SEEM. IT'LL SCARE THE BEANS FROM PEOPLE!

ISN'T IT JUST ANNOY, DADDY? I LIKE IT, TOO!



FROM UNDER THE MASK, BLONDE HAIR SHOWED. FROM THE SKULL SOCKETS, SMALL BLUE EYES SMILED. MITCH SMILED. MARION AND LOUISE... THE TWO SILENT DENOUNCERS OF HIS VIKALITY, HIS DARK POWER...

COMING DOWN, DADDY?

IN A MOMENT...



WHAT ALREADY HAD THERE BEEN IN LOUISE THAT TOOK THE DARK OF A DARK MAN AND BLEACHED AND BLEACHED THE DARK BROWN EYES AND BLACK HAIR AND WASHED AND BLEACHED THE UNKNOWN BABY ALL DURING THE PERIOD BEFORE BIRTH UNTIL THE CHILD WAS BORN, HAIR, BLONDE, BLUE EYES, RUDDY-CHEEKED...



IT'S A GIRL, MITCH. A BLONDE, BLUE-EYED GIRL...

OH...

LOUISE HAD NEVER WANTED A CHILD. SHE'D BEEN FRIGHTENED OF THE IDEA OF BIRTH. HE'D FORCED THE CHILD ON HER. IT HAD BEEN VERY EASY FOR LOUISE TO HATE THE HUSBAND WHO SO WANTED A SON THAT HE'D GIVE HIS ONLY WIFE OVER TO A MORTUARY. WHEN MITCH HAD PUT OUT A HAND TO TOUCH, THE MOTHER HAD TURNED AWAY TO CONSUME WITH HER NEW PINK DAUGHTER-CHILD, AWAY FROM THE DARK FORCING HUSBAND.



NO. DON'T TOUCH HER...

LOUISE. I...

NOW IT WAS OCTOBER AGAIN. THERE HAD BEEN OTHER OCTOBERS. HE'D THOUGHT OF THE LONG WINTERS, YEAR AFTER YEAR, THE ENDLESS MONTHS MORTARED INTO THE HOUSE BY AN INSANE FALL OF SNOW, TRAPPED WITH A WOMAN AND CHILD, MOTHER OF WHOM LOVED HIM...



SOMETIMES HE SUSPECTED THAT LOUISE HAD CONCEIVED THE CHILD AS AN IDEA, COMPLETELY ASEXUAL, A CONCEPTION OF CONTEMPTUOUS MIND AND CELL. AS A FIRM REFUGE TO HIM, SHE HAD PRODUCED A CHILD IN HER OWN IMAGE. HER EYES, THAT DAY IN THE HOSPITAL, WERE COLD. THEY'D SAID...



I HAVE A BLONDE DAUGHTER, MITCH. LOOK...

AND IT HAD ALL BEEN SO BEAUTIFULLY IRONIC. HIS SELFISHNESS DESERVED IT. THE DOCTOR HAD SHAKEN HIS HEAD AND SAID...



SORRY, MR. WILKER, YOUR WIFE WILL NEVER HAVE ANOTHER CHILD. THIS WAS THE LAST ONE!

AND AND I WANTED HAVE ANOTHER CHILD. I A BOY!

During the eight years, THERE HAD BEEN WINTERS. IN SPRING AND SUMMER HE GOT OUT, WALKED, WENT TO BALL GAMES. THERE WERE DESPERATE SOLUTIONS TO THE DESPERATE PROBLEM OF A HATED MAN...



OUT IN WINTER, THE HIKES AND GAMES AND ESCAPES
FELL AWAY WITH THE LEAVES. LIFE, LIKE A TREE,
STOOD EMPTY, THE FRUIT POOD. THE SAP RUN TO
EARTH. AND NOW, THE EARTH WINTER COMING, HE KNEW
THINGS WERE FINALLY AT AN END. HE SIMPLY COULD
NOT WEAR THIS ONE THROUGH...



THERE WAS AN ACID BULLED OFF IN HIM THAT HAD
SLOWLY EATEN THROUGH TISSUE AND TISSUE OVER THE
YEARS...AND NOW, TOMORROW, IT WOULD REACH THE
WILD EXPLOSIVE IN HIM AND ALL WOULD BE OVER.
DOWNSTAIRS, THERE WERE SHOUTS AND HILARITY...
WARREN, GREETING THE FIRST ARRIVALS... LOUISE,
TAKING PARENTS' COATS...



A HIGH STRUTTY SMELL OF CANDY
FILLED THE BUSTLING HOUSE.
LOUISE HAD LAID OUT APPLES IN
NEW SKINS OF CARAMEL. THERE
WERE VAST BOWLS OF PUNCH
FRESH-MIXED...



STRUNG APPLES IN EACH DOOR-
WAY, SCOOPED, VENTED PUMPKINS
PEERING TRIANGULARLY...



...AND A WAITING TUB OF WATER IN THE
CENTER OF THE LIVING ROOM, WAITING
WITH A BASK OF APPLES READY FOR
THE BOBBLING TO BEGIN...



MITCH WALKED TOWARD THE STAIRS. HE HESITATED...

WHY DON'T I JUST PACK A BORTCASE AND
LEAVE? NO, NOT WITHOUT HUNTING LOUISE
AS MUCH AS SHE'S HURT ME. DIVORCE WOULDN'T
HURT HER AT ALL. NO, I MUST MOOT HER. FIGURE
SOME WAY TO TAKE MARION AWAY FROM HER.
LEGALLY, YES. THAT'S IT. THAT WOULD MOOT
MOST OF ALL, TO TAKE MARION AWAY.



HE DECENDED THE STAIRS. LOUISE DIDN'T LOOK UP.
THE CHILDREN SHOUTED AND WAVED AS HE CAME DOWN.

HELLO, DOWN
THERE!

HI, MY
WILBERT!

HI



BY TEN O'CLOCK THE DOORBELL HAD STOPPED RINGING. THE APPLES WERE BITTEN FROM STRUNG-UP DOORS, THE PINK CHILD FACES WERE WIPED DRY FROM APPLE BOBBING, NAPPING, NAPPING WERE SWEALED WITH CARMEL AND PUMPKIN, AND HE, THE HUSBAND, HAD TAKEN OVER. HE TOOK THE PARTY RIGHT OUT OF LOUISE'S HANDS. HE RAN ABOUT, TALKING TO THE TWENTY CHILDREN AND THE TWELVE PARENTS, WHO WERE HAPPY WITH THE SPECIAL STRIKED COOLER HE'D FIRED THEM...

HE SUPERVISED PIN THE TAIL ON THE DONKEY...



...SPIN THE BOTTLE



...MUSICAL CHAIRS



...AND ALL THE REST, MOST FITS OF SHOUTING LAUGHTER, THEN, IN THE TRIANGULAR-EYED PUMPKIN SHINE, ALL HOUSE LIGHTS OUT, HE CROED.



HE TIGHTED TOWARD THE CELLAR, THE PARENTS COMMENTED TO EACH OTHER, HOOKING AT THE CLEVER HUSBAND, SPEAKING TO THE LUCKY WIFE...

HOW WELL HE GETS ON WITH THE CHILDREN.

YES.

THE CELLAR? THE TONS OF THE WITCH?



THE CHILDREN CROWDED AFTER THE HUSBAND, SQUEALING HE MADE A ROCK SHIVER...

ABANDON HOPE... ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE.



THE PARENTS CHUCKLED...

ONE BY ONE, THE CHILDREN SLID DOWN A SLIDE, WHICH MITCH HAD FIRED UP FROM TABLE SECTIONS, INTO THE DARK CELLAR. HE HISSED AND SHOUTED GHOSTLY UTTERANCES AFTER THEM. A WONDERFUL WAILING FILLED THE DARK PUMPKIN-LIGHTED HOUSE. EVERYBODY TALKED AT ONCE. EVERYBODY BUT MARION SHE'D SOKE THROUGH THE PARTY WITH A MINIMUM OF SOUND. IT WAS ALL INSIDE HER, ALL OF THE EXCITEMENT AND JOE...

WEEEEE.

GOLLY, IT'S DARK.

HURRY...



NOW, THE PARENTS. WITH LAUGHING RELUCTANCE THEY SLID DOWN THE INCLINE, UNWARRANTED, WHILE MARION STOOD BY, ALWAYS WANTING TO SEE IT ALL. TO BE THE LAST. LOUISE WENT DOWN WITHOUT MITCH'S HELP. MARION STOOD BY THE SLIDE WITH PICKED HER UP...

HERE WE GO



THEY SAT IN A KIST CIRCLE IN THE CELLAR. WARMTH CAME FROM THE DISTANT BULK OF THE FURNACE. THE CHAIRS STOOD IN A LONG LINE DOWN EACH WALL, TWENTY SQUEALING CHILDREN, TWELVE RUSTLING RELATIVES, ALTERNATELY SPAZED. THEY HAD ALL GROPED TO THEIR CHAIRS IN THE BLACKNESS, THE ENTIRE PROGRAM FROM HERE ON WAS TO BE ENACTED IN THE DARK. HE AS MR. INTERLOCUTOR...



WOW! GUESS!

THERE WAS A SMELL OF DAMP CEMENT AND THE SOUND OF THE WIND OUT IN THE OCTOBER STARS. EVERYBODY SETTLED. THE ROOM WAS BLACK BLACK, NOT A LIGHT, NOT A SHINE, NOT A GLINT OF AN EYE. THERE WAS A SCRAPPING OF CROCKERY, A METAL RATTLE. THE HUSBAND INTONED...



THE WITCH... IS DEAD. YEE-HEE!

THE WITCH IS DEAD, SHE HAS BEEN KILLED, AND HERE IS THE KNIFE SHE WAS KILLED WITH.



HE HANDED OVER THE KNIFE, IT WAS PASSED FROM HAND TO HAND, DOWN AND AROUND THE CIRCLE, WITH CHUCKLES AND LITTLE BOO CRIES AND COMMENTS FROM THE ADULTS...

THE WITCH IS DEAD, AND THIS IS HER HEAD.



...WHISPERED THE HUSBAND, AND HANDED AN ITEM TO THE NEAREST PERSON.

SOME LITTLE CHILD CRIED HAPPILY IN THE DARK...

OH, I KNOW HOW THIS GAME IS PLAYED. HE GETS SOME OLD CHICKEN INWARDS AND HE HANDS THEM AROUND SAYING "THOSE ARE HER INWARDS!", AND HE MAKES A CLAY HEAD AND PASSES IT FOR HER HEAD, AND PASSES A BONY JOINT FOR HER ARM, AND HE TAKES A MARBLE AND SAYS, "THIS IS HER EYE!", AND SOME BONE FOR HER TEETH AND A BUNCH OF FLESHY JUDDING AND GIVES THAT AND SAYS, "THIS IS HER STOMACH!" I KNOW HOW THIS IS PLAYED!

HUSH, YOU'LL SPOIL EVERYTHING!



MITCH SAID...



THE WITCH CAME TO HARM, AND THIS IS HER ARM.

YEE-HEE...

THE ITEMS WERE PASSED AND PASSED, LIKE HOT POTATOES, AROUND THE CIRCLE. SOME CHILDREN SCREAMED, WOULDN'T TOUCH THEM. SOME RAN FROM THEIR CHAIRS TO STAND IN THE CENTER OF THE CELLAR UNTIL THE GRISLY ITEMS HAD PASSED. ONE BOY SCOFFED...



AP, IT'S ONLY CHICKEN INWARDS COME BACK, HELEN!

SHOT FROM HAND TO HAND WITH SMALL SCREAM AFTER SCREAM, THE ITEMS WENT DOWN THE LINE, DOWN, DOWN, TO BE FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER AND ANOTHER. THE HUSBAND SAID

THE WITCH IS CUT APART,
AND THIS IS HER HEART.



SIX OR SEVEN ITEMS MOVING AT ONCE THROUGH THE LAUGHING, TREMBLING DARK, LOUISE SPOKE UP...

MARION DON'T BE AFRAID, IT'S
ONLY PLAY.



MARION DIDN'T SPEAK, LOUISE
ASKED...

MARION?
ARE YOU AFRAID?

SHE'S ALL
RIGHT, SHE'S
NOT AFRAID.



...SAID THE HUSBAND. MARION
DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING...

ON AND ON THE PASSING, THE SCREAMS,
THE HILARITY, THE AUTUMN WIND
SIGHED ABOUT THE HOUSE. AND HE,
THE HUSBAND, STOOD IN THE DARK
CELLAR, INTONING THE WORDS, HANDING
OUT THE ITEMS. LOUISE'S VOICE CAME
AGAIN FROM FAR ACROSS THE CELLAR.

MARION?



EVERYBODY WAS TALKING...

MARION, ANSWER ME, ARE
YOU AFRAID?



EVERYBODY QUIETED.

MARION DIDN'T ANSWER. THE HUSBAND STOOD
THERE, AT THE HEAD OF THE DARK CELLAR...
LOUISE CALLED...

MARION, ARE YOU THERE?



NO ANSWER. THE ROOM WAS SILENT...

WHERE'S MARION?

MAYBE SHE'S
UPSTAIRS?

MARION?



NO ANSWER... IT WAS QUIET...



CAME the DAWN!

I KNEW SOMEBODY WAS IN THE LODGE THE MINUTE I HIT THE CLEARING. I'D BEEN KRY ALL DAY HUNTING DOWN AN ELK'S DEER AND HAD STARTED BACK EMPTY HANDED. I SAW THE FAINT WEEP OF SMOKE CURLING UPWARD FROM THE FIELDSTONE CHIMNEY AND DRIFTING OFF INTO THE GATHERING TWILIGHT. I REMEMBERED HAVING PUT OUT THE FIRE THAT MORNING. INSTINCTIVELY, I PULLED THE BOLT ON MY RIFLE 30-30 AND SLID IT HOME. THEN I KICKED THE DOOR OPEN...



I HEAVILY DROPPED MY RIFLE. SHE'D BEEN STANDING BEFORE THE FIREPLACE AND HAD SPUN AROUND AS I BAROED IN. SHE SHRANK BACKWARD AT THE SIGHT OF THE SUN POINTING AT HER...

I JUST STOOD THERE STARRING AT HER. SHE WAS A VISION OF LOVELINESS... THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CREATURE I'D EVER SEEN. HER BLONDE HAIR, CATCHING THE FIRELIGHT, FELL LIKE A GOLDEN WATERFALL ABOUT HER BARE SHOULDERS. SHE CLUTCHED THE BORROWED BED SHEET TIGHTLY ABOUT HER SO THAT IT ACCENTED THE SOFT FLOWING CURVES OF HER SHAPELY BODY.



wood.

BEHIND HER, A MAKE-SHIFT CLOTHESLINE STRUNG BEFORE THE FIREPLACE HELD PINK LACY UNDERTHINGS, A PAIR OF SHEER STOCKINGS, A LIGHT BLUE BLOUSE, AND A DARK BLUE SKIRT. MELON, A POOL OF WATER RIPPLED...



I... I WAS LOST. I FELL IN THE STREAM OUT THERE. YOUR DOOR WAS OPEN. SO...

LOST? WHAT'S A GIRL LIKE YOU DOING UP HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

SHE DROPPED HER EYES AND SMILED, HER SOFT LIPS PARTING, REVEALING WHITE, EVEN TEETH...

I GUESS THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED. I WANDERED AROUND ALL DAY, THEN I SAW YOUR CASH. I THOUGHT IT WAS MINE.



I MOVED TOWARD HER. SHE STOPPED AS IF SHE'D SUDDENLY BEEN FROZEN. I REACHED OUT AND TOUCHED HER CLOTHES...



THEY'RE STILL WET. YOU'LL CATCH A DEATH OF COLD IF YOU PUT THEM BACK ON. I'LL FIND YOU SOMETHING TO WEAR.

SHE SMILED HER HEAD...

UP-OH! I GOT SOAKED TO MY SKIN. I BUILT THE FIRE AND... OH, I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND I BORROWED THIS SHEET OFF THE BED IN THERE.



LUCKY THING WITH ME BUSY. AND IN HERE LIKE THAT!

MY FATHER OWNS A LODGE LIKE THIS... OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. I CAME UP ALONE, FOR A REST. THIS MORNING I WANDERED AWAY AND COULDN'T FIND MY WAY BACK. I GOT PANICKY.

SO YOU STARTED RUNNING... ONLY IT WASN'T IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.



SHE STARTED SNATCHING HER CLOTHES OFF THE MAKE-SHIFT LINE...

I'LL GET INTO MY PANTS. THEY MUST BE DRY.

HOLD IF A MINUTE...



I WENT INTO THE BEDROOM AND GOT A T-SHIRT AND A PAIR OF JEANS...



HERE. THESE OUGHT TO DO TILL TOMORROW.

TOMORROW??

I HOODED, POINTING OUT THE WINDOW...



SHE TOOK THE CLOTHES AND WENT INTO THE BEDROOM AND SHUT THE DOOR. I SMILED, THINKING ABOUT ALL THE BOOKS I'D READ WITH SITUATIONS LIKE THIS. IT'S NEVER BELIEVED IT COULD HAPPEN SCUPT IN BOOKS. ALONE, WITH A BEAUTIFUL GIRL, IN A CABIN DEEP IN THE WOODS...



I WENT INTO THE KITCHEN AND LIT THE KEROSENE STOVE. THEN I STARTED OPENING SOME CANS. SHE CAME IN AFTER A WHILE...



SHE GLIDED ACROSS THE KITCHEN FLOOR, BAREFOOT. EXCEPT FOR WHERE THE WAIST WRINKLED UP UNDER THE BELT, MY JEANS FIT HER NICELY. AND THE T-SHIRT... WELL... IT LOOKED AS THOUGH IT HAD BEEN PAINTED ONTO HER CURVACIOUS BODY...



WE ATE IN SILENCE. CATY SEEMED NERVOUS. SHE STARTED AT EACH LITTLE SOUND OUTSIDE. I STUDIED HER. SHE WAS TWENTY...MAYBE TWENTY-ONE...WITH THE KIND OF FACE YOU'D SEE ON MAGAZINE COVERS. SHE SAW ME STARING AT HER AND SMILED...



I SAW HER KNUCKLES WHITEN AS SHE GRIPPED THE KNIFE SHE WAS USING TO CUT THE BREAD...



HER FACE DARKENED...



SHE GOT UP FROM THE TABLE AND MOVED INTO THE LIVING ROOM. SHE LOOKED AROUND...



ME? IT WAS A BIG MISTAKE... GOT A CIGARETTE?

SURE, HERE?

SHE LOOKED INTO MY EYES INVITINGLY...



MEANING ME? IT'S... IT'S PRETTY DARK OUT THERE. I DON'T THINK TO RUN...

I WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO, CATHY.

SHE PUT HER FINGERS TO MY LIPS. SHE SHOOK HER HEAD WHISPERING SOFTLY, HER CHEST RISING AND FALLING WITH EACH BREATH SHE DREW...



DON'T SAY ANYTHING, BOB... DON'T SPOKE THIS... KISS ME...

CATHY...

SHE CURLED UP ON THE COUCH BEFORE THE FIRE AND I RENT OVER AND LIT HER CIGARETTE. SHE DREW IN THE SMOKE, PURSED HER LIPS AND BLEW IT OUT INTO MY FACE IMPULSIVELY...



BUT WHY TALK ABOUT WHAT'S OVER AND DONE WITH? WHY NOT TALK ABOUT WHAT'S YET TO BEGIN?

MEANING...?

I STARTED TO BACK OFF... TO SIT DOWN IN THE CHAIR NEARBY... BUT SHE PATTED THE COUCH CUSHION BESIDE HER...



NOT THERE, BOB... HERE, AT ME.

SHE WAS MAKING THINGS DIFFICULT FOR ME. I SLID DOWN BESIDE HER AND SHE PUT HER HEAD ON MY SHOULDER. SHE STARED INTO THE FIRE AND BEYOND IT, SMILING...



IT'S *NICE* HERE LIKE THIS... JUST THE TWO OF US.

CATHY? I...

I PULLED HER TO ME AND SHE CAME ANXIOUSLY, ALMOST SHAKELY. HER LIPS WERE WARM AND EAGER, AND SHE PRESSED AGAINST ME AS WE CLUNG TO EACH OTHER...



BOB... DARLING...

BABY

THAT NIGHT CATHY WAS A FURNACE OF CONSUMING PASSION AND I WAS HER STOKER, TOWARD DAWN THE FIRE HAD DIED TO A PILE OF BURNING EMBERS. THE CABIN HAD CHILLED AND CATHY SHIVERED AS I HELD HER IN MY ARMS...



I'LL PUT ANOTHER LOG ON...

NO, DON'T! HOLD ME...

THEN I STIRRED UP THE FIRE AND PUT A FEW LOGS ON AND SAT DOWN ON THE CHAIR AND LIT MY PIPE. I WATCHED THE FLAMES LEAPING MERRILY, LICKING AT THE DRY FUEL. I LOOKED AT CATHY... BEAUTIFUL, DESIRABLE CATHY.



THE NEWS ANNOUNCER'S NASPY VOICE INTERRUPTED MY REVERIE. I REACHED FOR THE KNOB TO TURN IT OFF...



...IN SEARCH OF A YOUNG WOMAN WHO ESCAPED FROM THE STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE ORIGINALLY INSANE YESTERDAY. CITIZENS ARE WARNED TO STAY INDOORS. THIS WOMAN IS DANGEROUS.

SHE WAS ASLEEP. I WENT INTO THE BEDROOM AND GOT A BLANKET AND COVERED HER...



I WAS WIDE AWAKE. MY MIND WAS RACING AT TOP SPEED, FILLED WITH A MILLION CHURNING THOUGHTS. CATHY... CATHY...



ALL MY LIFE I'VE LOOKED FOR HER. ALL MY LIFE, AND NOW, SHE'S HERE... BESIDE ME... AND SHE'S MINE.

I FLIPPED ON THE RADIO AND TURNED IT TO THE LOCAL STATION, AND THE MUSIC CAME UP SOFTLY... FILLING THE ROOM...



AND NOW FOR THE LATEST NEWS, POLICE ARE COMING THE COUNTRYSIDE NORTH OF HERE IN SEARCH OF A...

CATHY STIRRED. I TURNED DOWN THE VOLUME.



SHE IS FIVE FOOT FOUR INCHES TALL, 22 YEARS OLD, WITH NATURAL BLONDE HAIR. LAST SEEN BY A HUNTER IN THE WOODED SECTION EAST OF THE STATE HIGHWAY, DRESSED IN THE INSTITUTION'S REGULAR BLUE UNIFORM. HOWEVER, SHE WILL PROBABLY ATTEMPT TO HIDE HERSELF OF THESE TELL-TALE CLOTHES.

BLUE UNIFORM. GASP. AND SHE'S IN THE AREA.

I STARED AT THE BLUE PLAQUE AND SHORT HANDS ON THE LINE NEAR THE FIREPLACE. THE ANNOUNCER CONTINUED...



ORIGINALLY COMMITTED TO THE STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE GOLD-BLOODED STABBING OF THE MAN TO WHOM SHE WAS ENGAGED, THIS WOMAN IS DEEMED CAPABLE OF KILLING AGAIN! ALL PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN...

GOOD LORD!

MY BLOOD FROZE IN MY VEINS. I LOOKED AT CATHY. SHE FIT THE DESCRIPTION PERFECTLY, AND SHE DID HAVE THAT BLUE OUTFIT. WAS CATHY THE MANIAC THEY WERE LOOKING FOR?



AND... AND I'VE BEEN HERE WITH HER... ALONE WITH HER.

BOB?

THE RADIO HAD AWAKENED BOB. I SNAPPED IT OFF. I WONDERED HOW MUCH SHE'D HEARD.



YAWNING, NOT THAT THE AGENTS DID THEY... UMMM... SAY ANYTHING ABOUT ME?

HUH? WHY... SHOULD THEY? NO ONE KNOWS YOU'RE LOST!

SHE SAT UP, SHE LOOKED AT ME QUEERLY...



OF... COURSE. I FORGOT. HOW SILLY OF ME.

CATHY, YOUR CLOTHES ARE DIRTY. DON'T YOU WANT TO PUT THEM ON?



OH-UM? I LIKE THESE.

C'MON! IT'S GETTING LIGHT OUT.

I STARTED FOR THE DOOR. CATHY FOLLOWED ME...



WHERE ARE WE GOING, BOB?

TO FIND YOUR CAGN, OF COURSE.

WE WERE OUTSIDE THE DOOR NOW. CATHY CAUGHT MY ARM. I COULD FEEL HER FINGERNAILS DIGGING IN...



I DON'T HAVE TO GO BACK, BOB. I CAN STAY HERE FOR A WHILE. DON'T YOU WANT ME TO? AFTER ALL, WE ARE ENGAGED NOW, AREN'T WE...?

SURE, CATHY? SURE...

IT ALL ADDED UP. THE UNIFORM SHE DIDN'T WANT TO PUT BACK ON... HER DESCRIPTION... HER FATHER'S STORY OF HER FATHER'S CAGN... HER SLIP ABOUT THE NEWS BROADCAST... AND NOW, NOT WANTING TO LEAVE... AND US BEING ENGAGED...

**CATHY WAS THE ESCAPED
MAMMA! THE POLICE WERE
LOOKING FOR! AND...SHE WAS
CAPABLE OF KILLING AGAIN!
I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO...**



**I SLAMMED THE DOOR AND LOCKED
IT. CATHY STOOD OUTSIDE, DUMB-
FOLLOWS...**



SHE STARTED TO CRY...

**THEN, LAST NIGHT,
BOB, IT DIDN'T MEAN
ANYTHING TO YOU.**

**NOT A
THING,
HOWEY!
BEAT IT,
HUNY!**



**I SAT DOWN IN A CHAIR FACING THE DOOR WITH
MY 30-30 ACROSS MY LAP. SUDDENLY CATHY BEGAN
TO POUND ON THE DOOR...FURIOUSLY...SHOUTING...**



**THEN, SILENCE. OUTSIDE, I COULD HEAR HER MOVING
AROUND. I WASN'T FALLING FOR ANYTHING. I WAITED.
AFTER A WHILE, A SICKLY FINGER OF RED REACHED IN
UNDER THE DOOR AND POOLED OUT ON THE FLOOR.**



**AND THEN CATHY SCREAMED. IT WAS AN EAR-SPLITTING
SHRIEK THAT MADE ME SHIVER...**



**I LEAPED TO THE DOOR AND FLUNG IT OPEN. I STARED
DOWN AT CATHY'S NUDE WHITE BODY WITH THE KNIFE
STICKING OUT OF HER NECK AND THE COARSE BLUE
UNIFORM FLUNG CARELESSLY OVER HER WITH THE STER-
CILED LETTERS: 'STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE CRIMINALLY
INSANE'.**



**AT THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING, A FIGURE WITH BLONDE
HAIR, DRESSED IN MY BLUE JEANS AND T-SHIRT, WAS JUST
DISAPPEARING INTO THE THICK WOODS... THE END**

**WE AT E.C. ARE PROUDEST
OF OUR SCIENCE - FICTION
MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...**



**LOOK FOR
THESE SEALS
WHEN YOU BUY!**

**THEY ARE YOUR ASSURANCE OF TOP
ENTERTAINMENT...FOUND ONLY ON
THE FOLLOWING E.C. MAGAZINES:**

**TALES FROM THE CRYPT
HAUNT OF FEAR - VAULT OF HORROR
SHOCK SUSPENSORIES
CRIME SUSPENSORIES
TWO-FISTED TALES - FRONTLINE COMBAT**

**MAD
WEIRD SCIENCE - WEIRD FANTASY
AND THE 136 ANNUAL ANTHOLOGIES:
WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY
TWO-FISTED ANNUAL - TALES OF TERROR**



Bar Packer snuffed deeply at the ether-soaked sponge, and felt the shabby room melting in front of him. His eyes blinked open and he managed to focus on the doctor for a second. Everything was going to be okay, the saw-bones was all set to go to work with his scalpel, and Danny was tight behind him with a gun jammed in the doc's back. Danny was a good kid . . . he'd make sure this unlicensed quack did what he had been told. And the liquor the old doctor had sopped up wouldn't do any harm, either . . . Steadied his nerves . . . strengthened the hand that was going to amputate Bar's gangrenous leg!

It had been only two hours ago that Bar — half-delirious when they carried him into the little rural hospital — heard the hick Police Surgeon mutter: 'The whole leg's become one big festering wound! Gangrene's set in around those slugs already . . . if we don't amputate at the hip, the prisoner's a goner before nightfall! Only way we can save his worthless life is to cut off his right leg!'

The Constables, who had captured Bar after a furious gun-fight, went into a nervous discussion of what to do with the biggest catch of their lives; Bar, thrashing from side to side with delirium, had become aware suddenly of a shadow flitting surreptitiously into the hospital room. Even through the wave of pain which engulfed him in spasms, Bar realized that Danny — who had somehow eluded the cops during the ambush in which Bar had been so seriously wounded — had succeeded in sneaking back to help his boss. As Bar

propped himself on one elbow, he heard Danny's husky voice creating a stir in the hospital room. "Just stay where you are, coppers!" Danny was saying, his gun leveled ominously. "One twitch and I empty this roscoe into the nearest belly!"

Bar must have fainted then, for he remembered nothing until the agony of jouncing along a dirt road awakened him. Danny was at the wheel, peering intently at the ruined road. "W-Where . . . am . . . I . . . ?" Bar whispered, a shudder of pain pulsing through his swollen right leg. "T-The hick hospital . . . ?"

"Miles behind us," Danny said. "We're on our way to that old sawbones who um work for the mob. That amputation I heard 'em talking about . . . Doc Spender, with some hooch under his belt, can do it in *his* place!"

Bar had passed out again, and when he came to he was stretched out on a table in the old doc's living room. Even through the ether that was making him drowsy, he knew that Danny had gotten the doc drunk enough to perform the amputation. In a few more minutes Bar would have no right leg . . . but it was better than rotting of gangrene . . .

* * * * *

They were in the car again, but this time Danny was alone in the front, with Bar bundled up on the rear seat.

"Went off fine," Danny said, intent on the road yawning in front of them. "Funny how Spender can perform surgery only when he's plastered! That leg came off neat as you'd want it!"

"A-All over, eh?" Bar whispered. "I guess it coulda been worse. That leg *had* to go before it killed me. And I still have one pin left . . ."

Almost without realizing it, Bar reached out to pat his left leg reassuringly.

"G-Good Lord!" he screeched aloud. "T-That drunken idiot . . . h-he amputated *on* my LEFT LEG!"



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SHOCK TALK

Dear Editors,

I would like to thank the hand of Ray Bradbury for his masterpiece, "The Small Assassin" (SS, No. 7). It was great. Superbly written. The best E.C. story I've ever read."

J. S. DiCesce
Brooklyn, N. Y.

... I've just finished reading the latest E.C.-Bradbury adaptation, and all I can say is it's TOPS. I certainly am glad E.C. has the honor of adapting Bradbury's stories instead of one of the companies that put out those crummy imitations of your magazine. They would have wrecked his stuff!

Ernie Cohen
Chicago, Ill.

... As for Ray Bradbury, I wish you'd keep his stories coming forever.

Robert Ott
Port Jervis, N. Y.

... I hope you will have many more of Mr. Bradbury's stories in your magazine.

William Ensmith
Riverside, Miss.

... I was certainly pleased to find that you have put Ray Bradbury's stories in your E.C. magazine. I don't think you could have chosen a better author. Probably his best, and best known, horror story, is "The October Game." Could you possibly adapt it in the near future?

Donna Albrecht
Muncie, Ind.

... My God, what's Ray Bradbury got against children? He must have been a mean child. He writes of it children are the downfall of the world. First, it was "Lily Play Poison," in Vault of Horror No. 29, and then it was "The Small Assassin," in Shock Suspense Stories No. 7...

Dick Arthur
(no address given)

Well, Dean, by now you've seen our adaption of "The October Game," and let us assure you that we not only agree it's the best horror story Ray Bradbury ever wrote ... we think it's the best horror story we've ever read ... but none! As for you, Dick, we trust "The October Game" has made you happy!!!—editors

Reader Dick Arthur's letter goes on to ask:

What is the cover of Shock Suspense Stories No. 7 supposed to mean? A man burning up, while another man is outside in a storm?

And there were many others, such as:

... I was pleased as punch to see a Foldstein cover on Shock Suspense Stories again. Al hasn't done one

since Shock Suspense Stories No. 1, has he? It was, as usual for Foldstein, a masterpiece. But I don't understand what was going on!

Herbie Volchok
N. Y. C.

... and the idea for the cover was terrific, having a close-up of a guy being hit by lightning with a flash of his reflection in a window. But what story did it come from?

Irvin Evans
Lynchburg, Va.

Get it, Herbie? As for the subject matter coming from a story in the book, I mean, we usually attempt to do this. However, as you may recall, for Shock No. 1, we tried to give you what we considered the most "shocking" cover we could think of ... that of someone being executed in an electric chair! Shock No. 7 being our first anniversary issue, we attempted once again, to consist of an even more "shocking" cover ... and came up with this illustration for you: someone being struck by lightning!—ed.

Dear Editors,

I wish to take this opportunity to say that your request (i.e. the appeal we made for your support during these trying times of overprinting and poor sales)—ed.) in SS, No. 7 was timely and necessary. After reading just one of your magazines, I became a regular purchaser of every one you put out. I don't see how any one could fail today all of your magazines after reading just one. I can say that I, along with many, many other of your readers, will do my best to continue giving you my loyal support.

Count Bruck
(no address given)

... All I can say is E.C. will be publishing magazines in the 21st century. People traveling between the planets will sit back and enjoy E.C.'s. People'll be going back on time-machines to get back work. In fact, by the year 2000, E.C.'s will be the only comics accepted by the then decreasing public. No more war ... people will be reading E.C.'s for excitement. And as for YOU thanking US for buying your magz, BAH! HUMBUG, we should thank YOU for PUBLISHING them.

Elaine Zarach
Toledo, Ohio

Crack!—ed.

Before closing, just a reminder that subscriptions to Shock or any other E.C. mag. will cost you 15¢ each, plus the value of a full year's supply ... six issues ... mailed envelopes! Address for your comments, suggestions, mailings, subscription orders, or chicken awards to:

The Editors
Shock Suspense Stories
Room 706, Dept. 9
225 Lafayette St.
N. Y. C. 12, N. Y.

The MEDDLERS!

WHEN HE CAME DOWNTOWN ON THOSE RARE VISITS TO PICK UP PROVISIONS OR THE PACKAGES OF CHEMICALS AND EQUIPMENT THAT WAITED FOR HIM AT THE LOCAL POST OFFICE, IT WAS AS THOUGH THE PEOPLE ON THE STREETS HAD SUDDENLY BEEN STRICKEN DEAF. IT SEEMED LIKE INVISIBLE HANDS HAD BEEN CLAPPED OVER THEIR MOUTHS, SMOTHERING THEIR WORDS IN THEIR THROATS, CUTTING OFF THEIR CONVERSATIONS. HE WOULD WALK PAST THEIR STARES, THROUGH THEIR SILENT DISTRUST AND HATE, AND FINISH HIS BUSINESS QUICKLY AND LEAVE. THEY HAD NOUSE FOR HIM IN THE TOWN. THEY DESPISED HIS MEDDLING IN THINGS THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND...



DOCTOR CONRAD RAVERS HAD COME TO THE QUIET TOWN OF MILLVILLE TWO YEARS BEFORE. HE'D ARRIVED IN A STATION WAGON FILLED WITH CHEMICALS AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT AND LABORATORY APPARATUS. AND HE'D STOOD ON THE DUSTY SIDEWALK AMID THE HOSTILE STARES, THE SILENT RESENTMENT AT A STRANGER, AND HE'D ~~WALKED~~ **WALKED**...

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHERE I CAN ~~RENT~~ **RENT** A SMALL HOUSE? I'D LIKE TO CARRY ON MY ~~WORK~~ **WORK** HERE IN MILLVILLE.

WHAT KIND OF WORK, STRANGER?



HE'D FELT THEIR ANIMOSITY TOWARD HIM ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. BUT HE'D SMILED, DETERMINED TO WIN THEIR FRIENDSHIP AND RESPECT...

SCIENTIFIC WORK, MY FRIEND. I AM A **RESEARCH CHEMIST**. THE SAND QUARRY NORTH OF TOWN CONTAINS COMPOUNDS I NEED IN MY EXPERIMENTS.

DON'T WANT NOBODY AROUND HERE WHO MIGHT BLOW UP THE PLACE, STRANGER.



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSE STORY



I ASSURE YOU, I WILL NOT BLOW UP MILLVILLE, GENTLEMEN. I AM NOT ENGAGED IN ANY KIND OF EXPERIMENTS OF THAT NATURE. MY WORK DEALS WITH THE ORGANIC.

ORGANIC? WHAT'S THAT?



IN SIMPLE TERMS, MY FRIENDS, I AM ATTEMPTING TO CREATE LIFE IN A TEST TUBE.

CREATE LIFE?

YOU MEAN LIKE FRANK ENSTEIN?



NOT AT ALL. I AM TRYING TO CREATE LIVING PHOTO-PLASM CHEMICALLY. PHOTOPLASM IS THE LIVING MATERIAL OF WHICH ALL LIFE IS BASICALLY CONSTRUCTED... FROM THE SINGLE-CELLED AMOEBA, TO MAN, WITH HIS BILLIONS AND BILLIONS OF CELLS.



NOW, SCIENCE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT THE CHEMICAL MAKEUP OF PHOTO-PLASM IS. IT KNOWS EACH ELEMENT AND ITS EXACT PROPORTION. YET, WHEN THESE ELEMENTS ARE COMBINED, THE RESULTANT DOES NOT LIVE.

MAYBE IT AIN'T SUPPOSED TO. STRANGER, MAYBE IT AIN'T YOUR BUSINESS TO BE ABLE TO MAKE A BUNCH OF CHEMICALS LIVE!



WELL, I.

WE DON'T WANT PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN WHO NOSE AROUND WITH WHAT AIN'T THEIR BUSINESS, STRANGER.

YOU BETTER MOVE ALONG, STRANGER. TAKE YOUR CHEMICALS AND JUNK AND FIND SOME OTHER PLACE TO LIVE.

BUT DESPITE THE TOWNFOLK'S DISAPPROVAL OF HIM, DOCTOR RIVERS HAD FOUND AN OLD HOUSE AND MOVED IN TO MILLVILLE. HE'D SHRUGGED OFF THEIR HOSTILITY, KEPT TO HIMSELF, AND PLUNGED INTO HIS WORK. AND EACH TIME HE'D LEFT THE SILENT TRANQUILITY OF HIS LABORATORY AND GONE DOWNTOWN, HE'D FELT THEIR STOWING RATHER...



GOOD MORNINGS, MR. RIVERS. I'D LIKE HALF A POUND OF BACON.

NO BACON.



BUT THERE'S A POUND THERE, IN THE BAKERY...

THAT'S SOLD. THE WIDOW JONES CALLED UP THIS MORNING. NO BACON.

AT FIRST IT WAS LITTLE THINGS THAT THE DOCTOR OVERLOOKED. BUT AS THE WEEKS AND MONTHS CRAWLED BY, THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE RESENTMENT TOWARD HIM BECAME MORE APPARENT....



BUT DOCTOR RIVERS IGNORED THEIR ANGER AND STUBBORNLY CONTINUED ON WITH HIS WORK.



BUT THE DOCTOR HAD FELT NO MALICE TOWARD HIS PERSECUTERS. HE'D GONE INTO TOWN AND...



A CAMPAIGN OF SILENCE HAD BEGUN. RARELY A WORD WAS SPOKEN TO THE DOCTOR. THE FORTH-BITTERS AND OLD THINGS THAT HUMD AROUND THE STONES IN TOWN CLAMMED UP WHEN HE APPROACHED. BUT THE CHILDREN VOICED THEIR ELDER'S BITTERNESS.



ONE DAY, A ROCK WAS PITCHED THROUGH HIS LABORATORY WINDOW... SMASHING A TRAY OF SOLUTION HE'D LABORED SO LONG TO PRODUCE.



HE'D LOOKED DOWN AT THE SPILLING OF HIS BLOOD AND THE TUMBLING GLASS CHEMICALS, AND HE'D SHAKEN HIS HEAD...



THE WINDOW REMAINED UNREPAIRED.



AND ALONG WITH THE ABUSES HE SUFFERED CAME REPEATED FAILURE AFTER FAILURE. THE EXPERIMENTAL SOLUTIONS THE DOCTOR PREPARED SHOWED NO SIGNS OF LIFE. BEAKER AFTER BEAKER OF DISCARDED FORMULAS LINED HIS SHelves...



LOOKS LIKE THIS ONE'S WRONG, TOO! ANOTHER FAILURE...

AND ALONG WITH THE DOCTOR'S SINKING DESIRE FOR THE SUCCESS OF HIS EXPERIMENTS CAME THE TOWNFOLK'S MOUNTING ANGER AND FRUSTRATION AT THEIR FAILURE TO MAKE HIM LEAVE...



I SAY LET'S RUN HIM OUT!

HE OUGHT TO BE TARRIED AND FEATHERED!

...UNTIL AN ANGRY HOSTILE CROWD, SHOUTING AND CURSING AND FLINGING INVOCATIVES, STORMED THE OLD HOUSE...



BUST THE DOOR DOWN! HE WON'T OPEN UP!

ONE... TWO... THREE...

BUT HE WOULD NOT BE DISCOURAGED. EACH FAILURE BROUGHT REDOUBLED EFFORT... EACH ABUSE, INCREASED DETERMINATION...



THAT SPARK OF LIFE... THAT INTANGIBLE SOMETHING THAT WILL BRACK THESE ELEMENTS INTO COMBINING, AND LIVING, AND GROWING. WHAT IS IT? WHERE CAN I FIND IT...?

UNTIL, ONE NIGHT...



O'YON! LET'S TEACH HIM A LESSON!

LET'S SHOW HIM HE AIN'T WANTED! LET'S SHOW HIM GOOD!

LET'S GO...

THEY MOVED THROUGH THE DARKENED STREETS... PICKING UP MORE AND MORE AS THEY MOVED ALONG...



WHERE 'S DOWN?

DOWN? RUN THE DOG OUT OF TOWN!

DOCTOR RIVERS STOOD IN HIS LABORATORY...

DEFIANT... CALM. THEY CROWDED IN, HIS VOICE WAS CONTROLLED, WITH NO TRACE OF FEAR...



WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS - WRONG. YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO...

GET HIM...

THE HELPLESS DOCTOR WAS LIFTED SOBBLY BY STRONG HANDS AND CARRIED FROM THE LABORATORY. OTHER ANGRY FISTS SMASHED TEST TUBES AND BOTTLES AND APPARATUS.



SUDDENLY THE STRUGGLING DOCTOR STIFFENED AND SCREAMED IN PAIN, CLUTCHING HIS CHEST.



INSIDE THE OLD HOUSE, THERE WAS SILENCE. THE LABORATORY LAY IN RUINS...



THE BOOKS THAT LINED THE SHELVES WERE DUMPED AND CRASHED INTO THE SINK...



THEY LAID HIM ON THE DEN-MOISTENED SPASS AND STOOD AROUND HIM, GASPING AND CATCHING THEIR BREATH. AND THEY WATCHED HIS EYES GLAZE AND LONG THIN EXPRESSIONLESS LIPS. THEY STARED SLINKY AT THE STARE.



AND IN THE SINK, THE COUNTLESS FAILURES, THE UNSUCCESSFUL SOLUTIONS, A LIFE'S WORK, SHRIMPELLED AND TRISTED AND RAN SAGELY DOWN THE DRAIN...



...DOWN INTO DARKNESS AND DAMPNESS, THROUGH FOUL-SMELLING PIPES AND RUSTED CONDUITS, INTO THE SEWERAGE SYSTEM OF THE TOWN...



AND THERE, IN THE DARKNESS AND THE FILTH, AMID THE WASTES OF MEN AND THE SWILL AND SLOUGH OF THE TOWN, THE SOLUTIONS SWIRLED AND EDDIED AND COMBINED... AND LIVED.



AND WHEN THE LEAVINGS AND THE WASTAGE OF THE PEOPLE ABOVE NO LONGER SATIATED THE GROWING SUCKING THING, IT SOUGHT OUT THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES.



ENOS SCOOPED HANDFULS OF WATER FROM THE BASIN AND DASHED THEM ON HIS FACE, CHASING THE SLEEP FROM HIS EYES. HE NEVER NOTICED THE RUBBER STOPPER LIFT AND THE GOZE FILL THE BASIN...



OUT OF THE MUCK AND POLLUTION, IT GREW ITS LIFE. IT FED UPON THE EXCREMENTS AND SLUDGE AND SPILLS OF THE COMMUNITY ABOVE. AND IT GREW. IT GREW LARGER. THE REFUSE NURTURED IT.



JED HAD BEEN TAKING A SHOWER. HE NEVER NOTICED THE SICKLY SLUR COSE UP FROM THE DRAIN.



MARTHA STARED IN HORROR AS JED CRASHED HIMSELF FROM THE BATH-ROOM. ONLY STUMPS REMAINED WHERE HAD ONCE BEEN HEALTHY LEGS...



WHEN HE LOOKED AT HIS HANDS, THEY WERE STRIPPED OF THEIR FLESH. WHEN HE LOOKED AT HIS FACE, HE SAW THE PERSONIFICATION OF DEATH...



AND THERE WERE ONLY THE BEGINNINGS...

CARRION DEATH!

MY LIPS ARE PARCHED AND SWOLLEN AND CRACKED. MY TONGUE IS DRY AND SEARCHES MY MOUTH FOR MOISTURE, BUT FINDS NONE. I LIE ON THE BURNING HOT SAND, STARING UP AT THE CLOUDLESS SKY, THE GLARING SUN BAKES DOWN, AND MY EYES SMART BUT THEY DO NOT TEAR, FOR I HAVE HAD NO WATER FOR FOUR DAYS. I LIE ON THE STEAMING DESERT BADLANDS AND I WATCH THE BUIZARDS CIRCING LAZILY SCREAMING AND SOARING, SWOOPING HUMBLY, AND I WAIT...

C'MON, YOU LOST VULTURES! C'MON DOWN HERE AND FEAST! C'MON DOWN HERE AND SET ME FREE!



I TRY TO REMEMBER HOW IT ALL BEGAN. HOW I CAME TO BE LYING HERE, IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, WAITING FOR THE CARRION BIRDS TO DROP DOWN AND SINK THEIR RAZOR SHARP TALONS INTO FLESH AND TEAR AND RIP AND FREE ME FROM THE ARMS OF DEATH. I SEE IT NOW THE RIBBON OF CONCRETE STRETCHES ACROSS THE DESERT, SWEEPING BEYOND MY SPEEDING CARWHEELS...

HE'S BAWLING ON ME! I'LL NEVER MAKE IT!



BESIDE ME, ON THE CAR SEAT, THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS RESTED IN A BLACK SATCHEL. THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR WHICH I'D HUNG UP A BARK AND MURDERED A GUARD. AHEAD, EAST LIVING AND WOMEN AND FANCY CLOTHES WAITED, SMILING, BECKONING. BUT RIGHT BEHIND ME, CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN US, NO SIREN WAILING, CAME THE STATE TROOPER...

YOU'LL NEVER GET ME, COPPER. I'LL KILL YOU FIRST!



I PRESSED THE ACCELERATOR TO THE FLOOR BOARD, URGING MY CAR AHEAD. I COULD SEE THE TROOPER IN THE REAR VIEW, HURTLING AFTER ME, TAKING CAREFUL AIM...

JUST A LITTLE CLOSER, COPPER! JUST A LITTLE...



BUT THE SOUND OF METAL CRASHING AGAINST METAL, AND THE DULL THUD OF FLESH AND BONE SPLASHING AGAINST STEEL NEVER CAME. MY CAR SWERVED, SKIDDING ONTO THE GRAVEL SHOULDER OF THE ROAD, AND EVERYTHING STARTED WHIRLING CRAZILY AS IT SPUN OVER...



THAT WAS ALL. I SLIPPED INTO A WORLD OF DARKNESS AND HEAT, AND WHEN I OPENED MY EYES, THE CAR WAS A MASS OF FLAMES, AND I WAS OUTSIDE, LYING BESIDE THE MOTORCYCLE. THE TROOPER WAS SPEAKING TO SOMEONE...

YEAH, I GOT HIM. HE'S OUT COLD. WRAPPED UP HIS GEAR BUT I PULLED HIM OUT BEFORE IT CAUGHT FIRE.



AND THEN I SLAMMED MY FOOT ON THE BRAKES. THE TIRES SCREELED ALONG THE CONCRETE, MARKING A DOUBLE-BLADE LINE OF BURNED RUBBER. I WAITED FOR THE IMPACT OF THE TROOPER AND HIS MOTORCYCLE, BASHING INTO THE REAR OF MY CAR...



I FELT MYSELF LEAVE THE SEAT, THROWN FORWARD, THE STEERING WHEEL CRASHING AGAINST MY CHEST. THEN I WAS FLYING UPWARD, MY HEAD STRIKING THE CAR ROOF. AS THE BLACKNESS CLOSED IN, I COULD HEAR THE CHATTERING OF GLASS AND THE ROAR OF THE TROOPER'S BIKE AS IT RENT PART...



HE WAS KNEELING BESIDE ME, MIKE IN HAND. I FELT A COLD RING OF STEEL AROUND MY WRIST. I WAS HAPPOGUEUED TO THE TROOPER, AND HE WAS REPORTING IN ON HIS TWO-WAY RADIO...

COME ON OUT AND GET US. I'LL WAIT HERE FOR YOU. THAT'S RIGHT SIXTEEN MILES SOUTH ON ROUTE 203...



I WAS CAUGHT. TERROR CLAWED AT MY RACING HEART. THE TROOPER WASN'T LOOKING AT ME. HE STILL THOUGHT I WAS OUT COLD. IT WAS MY ONLY CHANCE...

I RECOGNIZED HIS CAR BY THE DESCRIPTION. THE MONEY'S BEEN BURNED YEAH. OKAY... SEE YOU IN A FEW MINUTES. OH, BY THE WAY, BRING THE MASTER CUFF KEY. I HAVEN'T GOT MINE.



I YANKED HARD AND HE LOST HIS BALANCE. HE TUMPLED OVER ME AND MY FREE HAND FOUNDED HIS NECK. HIS CRY OF SURPRISE UNRAILED IN HIS THROAT AS MY FINGERS CLOSED AROUND IT...

KEY: G-D-D-N-N-UM-UM-UM...



I ROLLED OVER ON TOP OF HIM, STRADDLING HIM. HIS FREE HAND WENT FOR HIS GUN AND I KICKED. IT CLATTERED ACROSS THE CONCRETE ONTO THE GRAVEL SHOULDER. HIS EYES BULGED AND HIS FACE TURNED RED, THEN PURPLE, AND I HELD ON...



AND THEN HIS FOOT WENT LIMP AND I KNEW I'D STRANGLER HIM. I STARTED GOING THROUGH HIS POCKETS, LOOKING FOR THE KEY TO THE HANDCUFFS.

WHERE IS IT, BLAST YOU!
WHERE'S THE KEY?



NO KEY! I GUESS I GOT A LITTLE HYSTERICAL... I RIPPED AT HIS CLOTHES, CURSING. I DRAGGED HIM TO THE MOTORCYCLE AND STARTED TO RIFLE THROUGH THE SIDEWORKS WHEN I REMEMBERED WHAT HE'D SAID...

OH! THE WAG. BRING THE MASTER CUFF-KEY. I HAVEN'T GOT MINE.

GOOD LORD!



I WAS HANDCUFFED TO A CORPSE. AND IN A FEW MOMENTS, MORE COPS WOULD BE THERE. I LOOKED AROUND WILDLY, FAR DOWN THE LONG AND STRAIGHT ROAD, A SMALL SPECK APPEARED ON THE HORIZON.



I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE.

I PICKED UP THE DEAD TROOPER AND THREW HIM ACROSS MY SHOULDERS. TO TRY TO USE THE MOTORCYCLE WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. MY ONE CHANCE LAY IN MAKING FOR THE BAD LANDS. I STARTED TO RUN...



I KEPT RUNNING UNTIL MY HEART FELT LIKE SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO POUND THEIR WAY OUT OF MY CHEST... MY THROAT FELT LIKE A STEEL BAND WAS WRAPPED AROUND IT. AND MY LEGS FELT LIKE RUBBER...



GOT TO MAKE THE ROCKS BEFORE THEY GET THERE AND SEE WHAT HAPPENED!

I KEPT GOING. THE BODY I CARRIED FELT AS THOUGH IT WEIGHED FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS. MY LEGS WERE MALE. MY CLOTHES WERE SOAKED IN PERSPIRATION. FINALLY I REACHED THE RUSSSED ROCKY SECTION I'D HEADED FOR...

GASP...GASP...GASP...I GOT A KNIFE IN MY POCKET. IT'S THE ONLY WAY. I GOT TO GET...GASP...FREE OF HIM...



AND THEN, FOR BACK ACROSS THE BURNING SAND, BACK AT THE ROAD. I COULD HEAR THE CAR SCREAMING TO A STOP.

THEY'LL GET ME FOR SURE. I HAVEN'T GOT ENOUGH OF A LEAD!



I COULD SEE THEM GETTING OUT OF THEIR CAR, LOOKING AROUND AT THE SMOLDERING WRECK, THE PARKED BIKES.

THEY'RE NOT STATE TROOPERS. ONE OF THEM'S A WOMAN...



I LAY BEHIND A ROCK BESIDE THE TROOPER'S BODY, SUCKING IN THE HOT DESERT AIR AND SEARCHING MY POCKETS FOR MY KNIFE. BUT MY POCKETS WERE...

EMPTY! THE DIRTY @#\$%^!! HE MUST HAVE CLEARED ME OUT WHILE I WAS UNCONSCIOUS!



IT WAS THE BREAK I NEEDED. I'D CAUGHT MY BREATH, SO I HOISTED THE BODY TO MY SHOULDERS AGAIN AND STARTED OFF.



DARKNESS CAME FAST IN THE BADLANDS. THE SHADOWS FROM THE MOUNTAINS OFF TO THE WEST DROPPED DOWN ON YOU LIKE A GRAY BLANKET, AND THE STARS ARE SUDDENLY TWINKLING OVERHEAD. I DIDN'T SLEEP THAT FIRST NIGHT. I KEPT GOING, CARRYING THAT CORPSE, STUMBLING IN THE BLACKNESS, GETTING UP, AND MOVING ON.

THEY'LL NEVER TRACK ME NOW. THIS IS REAL ROCKY COUNTRY AND THEY CAN'T USE BLOODHOUNDS. THEY HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE THE HOUNDS TO SMELL MY CAR BURNED.



FINALLY, TOWARDS MORNING, I COLLAPSED FROM EXHAUSTION. I LAY BESIDE THE CORPSE, LICKING MY LIPS AND TASTING THE SALTY SWEAT. AND SUDDENLY I WANTED A DRINK. I WANTED A DRINK IN THE WORST WAY AND I KNEW IF I DIDN'T DO SOMETHING FAST, I'D DIE OF THIRST OUT THERE.

I'VE GOT TO GET FREE OF THIS BLASTED BODY SOMEHOW...



THE SUN CAME UP IN ALL ITS GLAZING FURY AND BAKED DOWN ON THE ROCKS AND THE SAND. I PULLED AND TUNGED, TRYING TO WRENCH THE CURPS FROM THE CORPSE, NOW GROWING RIGID WITH RIGOR MORTE...



IT'S NO USE! I'VE GOT TO CUT MYSELF AWAY...

AND THEN HIS GLEAMING BADGE CAUGHT THE SUN'S REFLECTION AND SENT IT STREAMING INTO MY EYES. I TUGGED, RIPPING IT FROM HIS UNIFORM...



OF COURSE! HIS BADGE! I'LL JUST SHARPEN IT ON THIS ROCK...

ONCE, WHEN I WAS A KID, I WENT DOWN TO THE STOCKYARDS... TO A SLAUGHTER HOUSE... AND WATCHED THEM SLAUGHTER A LAMB AND SON IT. IT MADE ME SICK. AS THE SHAPPEEN BADGE SLIT THE WHITE FLESH, REVEALING THE RED, SLIMY MUSCLES AND TENDONS, I GOT SICK AGAIN, JUST LIKE THAT TIME SO LONG AGO...



SHOVE...

THE BADGE DROPPED FROM MY HAND, CLATTERED TO THE ROCKY GROUND, AND SKIPPED DOWN INTO A CREVICE. WHEN I WAS FINISHED EMPTYING MY GUTS OF THE LAST DROP OF LIQUID LEFT IN THEM, I REALIZED WHAT HAD HAPPENED...



MY ONE CHANCE... COME I CAN'T REACH IT...

AND THEN THEY WERE OVERHEAD... THE BUZZARDS. THEY SOARED AND CIRCLED, SCARCELY MOVING THEIR WINGS. THEIR HUNGRY SCREAMS ECHOED FROM ROCK TO ROCK, SUMMING MORE...



GOOD LORD!

I STARTED TO RUN... GRASSING THE BODY... FALLING... GETTING UP... BUT THEY STAYED ABOVE ME, CIRCLING, CIRCLING, THEIR SCREAMS LAUGHING AT ME...



OH, LORD. WHAT'LL I DO? WHAT'LL I DO?

I KEPT GOING UNTIL I COULDN'T GO ON ANY FURTHER. MY KNEES BLEED WHERE THE HANDCUFFS HAD TORN THE FLESH. MY LIPS WERE DRY. EVERYTHING STARTED SPINNING. I SLIPPED TO THE GROUND. AND AS THE BLACKNESS CLOSED IN, THE SCREAMS SEEMED TO COME OUT OF THE HOT AIR DOWN TOWARD ME.



WHEN I CAME TO, I WAS SHIVERING FROM THE COLD. IT WAS NIGHT AGAIN. BESIDE ME, THE CORPSE LAY RIGID, AND BLACK SHADOWS CROUCHED UPON IT. I SCREAMED...



THE BUZZARDS TOOK UP THE CHORUS, THEIR WINGS BEATING UP INTO THE BLACKNESS. THEY CIRCLED ABOVE ME, FRIGHTENED OFF BY MY GRIE...



THEY CHOKE. THEY WERE FEEDING ON HIM...

I RETCHED BUT THERE WAS NOTHING IN ME TO NERVE. I LAY BACK, SHIVERING AND PERSPERING, LISTENING TO THE SCREAMS AND THE FLAPPING OF BARE WINGS...



THEY'LL COME BACK IF I GO TO SLEEP. I CAN'T LET THEM COME BACK! I'VE GOT TO STAY AWAKE...

THE NIGHT CRAWLED BY AND DAWN CAME, AND ONCE MORE THE SUN LEAPED INTO THE CLOUDLESS SKY AND BURNED DOWN UPON ME, AND THE STENCH OF THE PARTIALLY EATEN BODY I WAS HANDCUFFED TO SEARED MY DUST-FILLED DRY NOSTRILS...



IF I COULD FIND A CABIN... A PROSPECTOR'S OR A MINER'S... WITH A KNIFE...

I LIFTED THE PARTIALLY EATEN BODY AND STAGGERED ON... SEARCHING... LISTENING. BUT THE ONLY SOUNDS I HEARD WERE THE CRIES OF THE CANYON BIRDS OVERHEAD. BY NIGHTFALL, MY LIPS WERE CRACKED AND MY TONGUE WAS SWOLLEN AND I RESPONDED NO LONGER...



I'LL DIE IF I DON'T GET FREE OF HIM! I'LL DIE...

I WAS WEAK AND DIZZY AND I HAD TO FIGHT TO KEEP AWAKE... TO KEEP THOSE HORRIBLE CREATURES AWAY. AND THEN I THOUGHT OF MY OWN CHANCE... MY ONE DESPERATE CHANCE TO SAVE MYSELF...



THE BUZZARDS! THEY COULD SAVE ME. THEY DON'T EAT LIVE FLESH... ONLY DEAD. THEY COULD FREE ME...

AND AS DAWN OF THE FOURTH DAY BROKE, I LAY ON THE HOT BURNING SAND STARRING UP AT THE CLOUDLESS SKY WATCHING THE BUZZARDS CIRCLING LAZILY, SCREAMING AND ROARING, SWOOPING HUNGRILY. AND I WAITED...



O'MON, YOU LOUSY VULTURES! COME DOWN HERE AND FEAST! COME DOWN HERE AND GET ME FREE!

THE GLARING SUN BAKES DOWN, AND MY STOMACH SMARTS BUT THEY DO NOT TRAP, FOR I HAVE HAD NO WATER FOR FOUR DAYS. I WAIT, I WAIT, AND I WATCH. AND THEN, ONE OF THEM DROPS TOWARD ME...



I DO NOT MOVE. I DO NOT DARE. I DO NOT WANT TO SCARE THEM OFF AGAIN, I CLOSE MY EYES, LISTENING TO THE BEATING OF WINGS AS THE OTHERS COME DOWN...



I LISTEN TO THEM TEARING AND SCREECHING AND FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES AS THEY GO FOR UPON THE DEAD FLESH...



AND I WAIT. I WAIT AND LISTEN TO THE TEARING AND PULLING AND SCREECHING AND SOFT MUNCHING. AND THEN I LOOK...

OH, MY LORD!



THE CORPSE BESIDE ME IS PRACTICALLY STRIPPED CLEAN. BUT I FEEL NO NAUSEA. I FEEL NO REVULSION. NOT EVEN WHEN I SEE THE HULKING SHOULD ON MY OWN CHEST, TEARING AND RIPPING AND SCREEALING...

NO! NO!



AND I FEEL NO PAIN AS THE VICELIKE JAWS OF THE HAW-NECKED VULTURES CLOSE UPON MY FLESH AND FEEL IT FROM MY BONES. I CANNOT MOVE... I CANNOT STOP THEM.



I CAN ONLY WATCH IN SILENT HORROR AS THEY FEED UPON ME. I CAN WATCH ONLY UNTIL ONE OF THEM FLICKS MY EYEBALLS FROM MY SKULL...



FOR I AM DEAD...

THE END

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